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EDITORIAL

THE CHURCH POLITICAL

Pope John Paul II commands no armed divisions in Latin America, but he has launched an impressive ideological offensive against insurgent forces in the impoverished countries of this hemisphere. His weaponry is contained in the intricate logic of the papal "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation,'" targeted squarely at clerics who have synthesized Christian charity with a Marxist analysis to form a revolutionary movement of the poor. At the same time, the Vatican has summoned a leading Brazilian liberationist, Friar Leonardo Boff, to Rome for "interrogation."

The instruction employs the strategy popes have used in past attacks on insurgencies that threatened to establish independent centers of power: it claims a monopoly on divine truth. Joan of Arc, Galileo and Martin Luther presented different challenges to Vatican domination, but their threat was above all political, for they questioned the absolute authority of Rome.

Liberation theology, the Vatican says, "challenges . . . the sacramental and hierarchical structure of the church, which was willed by the Lord Himself. There is a denunciation of members of the hierarchy and the magisterium as objective representatives of the ruling class which has to be opposed." In other words, the conservatives are doing God's work, and the radicals are not.

The immensely sophisticated Vatican politicians know that liberation theology did not materialize out of thin air, that it developed from the misery of millions of people. Their pronouncement deplores tyranny and exploitation and offers the hope of divine intercession and relief in the hereafter. But the unhappy inhabitants of the barrios and *favelas* may not be content to wait forever, and the argument between the Roman hierarchy and the Latin radicals looks to be a long and bitter contest.

HACKS WITH CASH
Alexander Cockburn

PRO-PAC BACKLASH
Mark Green

SUPERGRASS TRIALS IN BELFAST
James Murphy

C. WRIGHT MILLS
Dan Wakefield

'TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE'
Earl Rovit

'RED DAWN'
Andrew Kopkind

DALLAS MEMORIES

BACKSTAGE AT THE G.O.P. SPECTACULAR

NORA SAYRE

Time-traveling may be as refreshing as aerobics. Having attended three Republican National Conventions, I experienced a series of flashbacks in Dallas that enlivened my week there; if there were moments of drought, they were irrigated by memory. In 1972 in Miami Beach, I saw the face of Leonid Brezhnev smiling from the convention screen and heard the delegates applauding (though not loudly) when they were told that Richard Nixon was a friend of the Soviet Union. The President promised, "We shall never stain the honor of America," and soothsayers asserted that Spiro Agnew would inherit the White House four years later.

Neither man was mentioned in Kansas City in 1976, where many Reagan delegates sobbed without inhibition when their candidate failed to win the nomination. Convinced that Reagan was too old to run again, some of his admirers chanted "Four more months!" at Gerald Ford's family. (Most Reagan delegates I encountered were too fraught with emotion to discuss a letter right-wing novelist Ayn Rand had written to *The New York Times* not long before, in which she denounced Reagan, leading off with: "Since he denies the right to abortion, he cannot be the defender of any rights.") Throughout, the speakers complained that Jimmy Carter had "stolen" their ideas and that the Democrats were "trying to sing our song." At the same time, Barry Goldwater predicted that the election of Carter would accelerate "our suicidal slide toward socialism," and John Connally compared the impending destruction of our society to the annihilation of the Pharaohs.

(*Continued on Page 209*)

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LETTERS.

ROILING ACROSS THE LAND

Washington

Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers write that "labor's friends do not help the movement" by withholding the truth "that at least some of labor's wounds are self-inflicted" ["Big Labor Is Hurting—Itself," *The Nation*, Sept. 1]. They then proceed to trash big labor while ignoring what has been happening in individual unions and union locals, and keeping to themselves just what it is that "labor's friends" could be doing to help.

Why didn't they look at the progressive people and debates and activities increasingly visible within America's unions? They would have found that on issue after issue there are workers and elected officials struggling to analyze and resist—often with no help from progressives or liberals. Whether the object is employer demands for wrenching technological shifts or wage reductions or work-rule changes or noncash issues such as Reagan's foreign policy or trendy acquiescence to reduction in civil liberties or a rush to abandon old radical agendas in the name of realism, there is progressive ferment in labor across the land. This ferment is roiling no less within the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s inner sanctum than among restless, mobilizing, hopeful rank-and-filers.

One result is that more than twenty unions, representing a majority of the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s membership, support the nuclear freeze. The federation's largest union, the United Food and Commercial Workers, opposes the MX missile and the deployment of the cruise and Pershing missiles as well. More than a half-dozen of the largest unions oppose Reagan's policies in Central America and have sent delegations to several Central American countries to investigate and report back to the American people. Dozens of committees and officers from union locals around the country have endorsed the National Conference Against U.S. Military Intervention In Central America/The Caribbean, which will be held in Cleveland this month.

Middle-level officials and union members of every occupation are taking the lead on those and other issues within their communities. Together, they are increasing the pressure on their national leadership to reassess and perhaps realign their policies. They are educating themselves and their leaders about the need to shape technological innovation (sometimes by saying No!) and to share decisions with owners on production and management questions. Many are even working actively for stronger Clean Air Act authorization, acid rain protections and toxic-waste prohibitions. . . .

Why didn't Ferguson and Rogers describe the shifting power and influence within the A.F.L.-C.I.O.—locally and in the National Executive Council—where conservative unions accustomed to setting labor's agenda are being challenged by growing unions with more democratic structures and more progressive outlooks? Why didn't they refer to the indispensable union efforts for social change of the last few years? In Los Angeles, for example, union members joined with diverse allies to qualify Proposition 10, a "jobs with peace" initiative, on that city's November ballot.

Yes, the labor movement would like to have, and needs, more political influence. But greater political influence—progressive influence—will come from the growing debates and courageous activities going on among almost a hundred diverse unions around cash and noncash issues, and from intensive jockeying for leadership. And that's where labor's friends and supporters who lament the sterility of big labor, who seek activist labor involvement against Reagan and the right and who seek labor pressure to keep the Democrats honest need to be involved.

Progressives would be aided if publications like *The Nation* would seriously probe those issues and those political dynamics, leaving simplistic truths of boring labor-bashing to *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and the TV news.

Richard L. Grossman
Environmentalists for Full Employment

FERGUSON AND ROGERS REPLY

New York City

Richard Grossman's hyperaccusatory tone is outrageous, and his implication that we engaged in "simplistic . . . labor-bashing" is just short of incredible. As any reader of our article can see, we clearly distinguish between the activities of the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s central leadership and those of its member unions and rank and file. Just as obviously, we agree with Grossman that the many progressive forces active in the labor movement deserve coverage and analysis, and that magazines like *The Nation* ought to provide space for that. Someday, perhaps, they will. In the meantime, give us a break.

Thomas Ferguson
Joel Rogers

NO 'PICKY $30 MILLION'

Washington

The decision made by Congress on August 10 regarding aid for Central America has even graver consequences than those described by Robert C. Eckhardt ["Up, Up and Away," *The Nation*, Sept. 1]. He is certainly correct to point out that the debate was more than one over "a picky $30 million" in additional military aid for El Salvador: on the final day of the summer session, August 10, Congress approved more than a half-billion dollars in military and economic aid for the region. Those funds are the down payment on Reagan's five-year Central America program, based on his Administration's interpretation of how to implement the Kissinger commission report.

The choice facing Congress was between the House version of a supplemental appropriations bill (H.R. 6040), which contained $130 million in extra military and economic aid for Central America but no military aid for El Salvador, and the Senate version, calling for another $565 million for the region, with $116.7 million slated for the Salvadoran military.

The Kemp compromise, named for its sponsor, Representative Jack Kemp of New York, ultimately approved by Congress sends an additional $503 million to Central America this year and includes $70 million in military aid for El Salvador. That decision brings the total fiscal 1984 foreign aid for Central America to more than $1 billion and the total fiscal 1984 military aid for El Salvador to $196.5 million.

The debate and vote on H.R. 6040 was a classic case of not allowing the facts to muddle prejudices. Kemp described his proposal as "modest" aid to signal support for Salvadoran President José Napoleón Duarte. However, the facts indicate otherwise: (1) the money was not needed, as millions of dollars of previously appropriated military and economic aid are still in the pipeline for Central America; (2) the funds will not reach the region for weeks and months into fiscal 1985, marking them clearly as neither urgent nor even relevant to 1984 funding decisions; and (3) the decision to approve those funds lays the groundwork for even larger supplemental requests in 1985.

Among the more articulate of the 161 representatives who rejected the expenditure was Matthew McHugh of New York. McHugh concluded, in his attempt to put the facts before his colleagues: "Does it make sense to pump $500 million more into Central America, after we have provided $600 million already? This amounts to a second foreign aid bill; it should not be seen as a supplemental appropriation. . . . This is not a question of whether you support President Duarte. It is a question of the sound use of U.S. resources. . . . Pumping this much money into Central America, including El Salvador, under these circumstances is unwise and irresponsible."

Another sorry fact is that they did it anyway.

Cynthia M. Buhl
The Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space. Our policy is to publish as many letters as space permits, but inevitably a backlog develops, so please bear with us.

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EDITORIALS.

Canada's Reagan?

Sometimes it seems Canada's national sport is catch-up with the United States. Last Tuesday was one of those times. In one mighty electoral leap Canadians joined the American Eighties, rejecting the path of cautious independence nurtured for many years by a Liberal Party government, and opting for a version of Reaganomics, militarism, U.S. investment and the degradation of the welfare state: in short, the conservative project President Reagan has so successfully established in the lower forty-eight.

The presumptive Canadian Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, may not be a Reagan clone—nobody's perfect—but his Conservative Party's landslide victory at the polls is surely part of the same historical movement that gave rise to Reaganism in the United States. In his campaign, Mulroney celebrated corporate power, rejected the policy of government intervention developed by his predecessor, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, called for increased spending for Canada's modest armed services and orated rhapsodically about "traditional values." He also made it clear that U.S. companies, which have been under scrutiny and some restrictions since Trudeau's early years, would have a freer reign in working the Canadian economy.

Of course Canada has never been entirely out of Washington's control. It is far and away America's favorite trading partner; it is penetrated to its core by American culture;

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and it is locked in the Pentagon's continental military orbit. But Trudeau managed to eke out a modicum of independence, in national sentiment if not always in political and economic substance. Trudeau was a leader of the internationalist group in the United Nations that tried to steer clear of bloc demands for subservience on key issues like the arms race, Third World insurgency and North-South development. Canada provided a refuge for protesters and resisters during the Vietnam War era, and it avoided being infected by the worst viruses of American antiradicalism. Its humane and effective welfare system, especially the national health insurance program, offered a model for the United States.

For two decades, Trudeau's personal charm and electoral strategies seemed unassailable, but there were serious cracks in his window of invulnerability. His Liberal Party ruled too long—almost fifty years, with only one significant hiatus, in the late 1950s—for healthy parliamentary progress, and the Canadian economy was too anemic to bounce back from the U.S.-led recession of the early Reagan years. Trudeau himself bowed out with unfortunate arrogance and petulance, and his party chose a dull and conservative replacement in John Turner, "a Galahad," one Canadian politician remarked last week, "who turned out to be a nerd."

Pre-election polls suggested that Canadians hoped to jump on the Reagan gravy train, suspect though that vehicle looks from this side of the border. They saw that the number of jobs created in the U.S. service economy since 1981 equals the size of the entire Canadian work force. The U.S. currency is pumping iron while the Canadian dollar has fallen to 77 cents in the exchange markets. Inflation and unemployment are still high from British Columbia to Newfoundland.

But the hopeful Canadians may be in for some unpleasantness, and sooner than their neighbors to the south. Reaganomics has worked its marketplace magic with enormous public expenditures for defense; despite Mulroney's militaristic rhetoric, such a course is not possible in his land. Also, the service economy in the United States, which has brought VCRs and compact Broncos to the masses, cannot be duplicated in Canada without a vast industrial base and a worldwide system of markets, resources and finances.

For now, Canada joins the United States and Britain in the right wing of the English-speaking industrial camp. But the surprisingly good showing of the socialist New Democratic Party in the election offers some hope. The N.D.P. could provide a haven for victims of Mulroney's policies and a vantage point from which to launch the inevitable counterattack.

Balancing Act

In his superior political thriller *Kings in the Counting House* Herbert Mitgang has his newspaperman-hero speak of having "seen too many stories . . . balanced to death." He refers of course to the kind of reportorial "objectivity" in which truth is pulled in so many directions it becomes like putty—a colorless, featureless glob. (Alexander Cockburn offers another gloss on this subject on page 198.) In the August 31 issue of *The New York Times*, a bastion of both-sidesmanship, we see the technique carried inadvertently to a parodistic extreme.

The occasion was the first anniversary of the downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007, and the *Times* editors bethought themselves to offer the two most contrasting views of the affair: Moscow's and Washington's.

In the left-hand column, appropriately, the paper's man in Moscow, Serge Schmemann, reports that the anniversary prompted "a barrage of articles in the Soviet press arguing and rearguing Moscow's fundamental defense, that the jumbo jet was on a spying mission for the United States." Schmemann writes that "most of the articles have been drawn from the Western press." *Za Rubezhom*, the Union of Writers' weekly, for example, carried "entire articles from the British publication Defense Attaché and the American weekly magazine The Nation arguing that the jetliner could have been on a probing mission into Soviet airspace for American intelligence."

In all *The Times*'s coverage of the Flight 007 anniversary, including a "questions still remain" takeout the following day, that is the only mention of the articles in *Defence Attaché* and *The Nation* [see David Pearson, "K.A.L. 007: What the U.S. Knew and When We Knew It," August 18-25]. These and other independent investigations are reduced to grist for the Soviet propaganda mills.

On the right side of the page, Bernard Gwertzman limns the mood in Washington, or rather the Administration. He quotes a number of "officials," ranging from senior White House to senior State Department, to the effect that the downing of Flight 007 was a boost for President Reagan. It was "a black eye of colossal proportions to the Soviets"; it "took the heat off Reagan" to tone down his anti-Soviet rhetoric; it was a "political boon."

There was still another treatment of the case that day, on the Op-Ed page, a veritable putty factory of pro/conmanship. There Richard Burt, a former *Times*man and currently Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, writes that the various articles critical of the Administration's handling of the K.A.L. 007 affair were pure Soviet propaganda. He contends that the Russians have "continued to churn out baloney" that "Flight 7 was in fact some sort of spy plane." Then he glides into an innuendo that should be required reading for disinformation experts:

> Some of the propaganda has been picked up and replayed by others, who are busy taking advantage of unavoidable gaps in our knowledge of what happened. This has produced a genre of spy-plane theories that start from the premise that our Government must be guilty. They assume that somebody here must have known that the airliner was off course.

So much for the dupes in the West; so much for their evidence, acquired, Burt neglects to say, through painstaking independent research and analysis. So much for the questions they raise, which Burt dismisses peremptorily.

And so we have, in a single edition of *The Times*, the official Kremlin view versus the Washington line on the news pages, followed by a U.S. State Department official summing up on the opinion page. What could a reader of that

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day's paper conclude? Nothing at all: truth is pliable as putty. Washington's and Moscow's versions are all but identical. Schmemann reports that the Kremlin maintains the Reagan Administration "was using the incident to provoke anti-Soviet hysteria," while Gwertzman quotes a U.S. official as saying that as a result of the tragedy, "a basic kind of anti-Soviet mood was created that is fairly supportive of the President." What was that song Judy Collins used to sing?

I've looked at clouds from both sides now,
From up and down, and still somehow
It's clouds' illusions I recall.
I really don't know clouds at all.

Cruises in Court

Last fall, the first shipment of U.S. cruise missiles—each with a warhead fifteen times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima—arrived at the U.S. Air Force base at Greenham Common, just fifty miles from London. In response, twelve British women and one American, all from the Greenham Peace Camp, along with Representatives Ted Weiss and Ron Dellums, filed a lawsuit in New York City to get rid of the weapons.

On July 31, Federal District Court Judge David Edelstein dismissed the suit, which charged that President Reagan had illegally ordered cruise missiles to be installed in Britain. Never before had the U.S. government been challenged on the legality of a nuclear weapons system. The courts must not interfere with the Presidential prerogative to make defense policy, Edelstein wrote, because "the fact-finding that would be necessary for a substantive decision is unmanageable and beyond the competence and expertise of the judiciary."

But Edelstein did recognize the right of an individual to sue in U.S. courts over injuries allegedly related to American nuclear weapons. That concession must have disappointed government attorneys, who had contended that the case was a waste of time and allowing it to proceed would precipitate an avalanche of lawsuits that would undermine national security. United States Attorney Rudolph Giuliani had argued that "people who live near bases all over the world could come to American courts and challenge decisions on deployment of missiles and arms and movement of troops." In his brief, Giuliani had stated that the prospect of nuclear war is a fact of life the courts cannot change. "All humanity must live with the ever-present haunting fear of nuclear destruction."

Judge Edelstein disagreed. "Plaintiffs do not ask this court to decide the wisdom, morality, or efficacy of the decision to deploy Cruise missiles at Greenham Common," he wrote. They "ask this court to determine the legality of the challenged action [missile deployment]. In particular, they ask the court to adjudicate torts, to protect constitutional rights of citizens and of non-citizens under United States control. . . . The Constitution commits the resolution of these issues to the courts." Then, in a significant move, Edelstein did not reject precepts of international law and of the U.S. Constitution invoked by the plaintiffs. "If we had to lose, this was the best possible way to lose," said Anne Simon, an attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York City representing the women and Congressmen.

Attorneys at the center developed some unique legal arguments against the cruise. It may come as a surprise to the Pentagon, but the Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Protocol I of 1977, the Nuremberg decisions of 1946, the 1925 Geneva Protocol on poison gas, the Hague Convention of 1907, the U.N. Charter and several U.N. declarations forbid the indiscriminate killing of noncombatants and the destruction of cultural property and places of worship. They also bar the use of weapons that cause aggravated human suffering or severe environmental damage, that are disproportionate to military objectives or that violate the sovereignty of neutral countries. Representatives Dellums and Weiss claimed that the President's ability to press the button launching the cruise usurps the power of Congress to declare war, since voting to fund the missiles cannot be construed as a declaration of war.

Yet the judge stopped short of deciding whether cruise deployment violates the principles of international law and the rights of the plaintiffs. To address that question, wrote Edelstein, "the court would have to determine that the deployment of cruise missiles is an act of aggression and that it will render nuclear war likely." And it is impossible to weigh the evidence because there isn't any proof that cruise missiles are inherently dangerous. Besides, wrote Edelstein, the courts lack the power to grant the relief sought by the plaintiffs, an order that the U.S. government take the missiles away. (He ignored the plaintiffs' second request, a simple declaration that the missiles are illegal.) Removing the missiles could actually threaten peace: it could "engender serious discord among our allies," undermine arms negotiations and "encourage the U.S.S.R. to intensify its pressure for unilateral Western concessions."

The Greenham women are considering an appeal of the decision. Consultation will take some time, since more than a hundred antinuclear and religious groups and labor unions from Europe and the United States filed papers in support of the women. Encouraged by the fact that Edelstein did not deny their right to be in court or the body of laws on which they based their case, the Greenham women will not be easily silenced. "We're beginning the process of challenging nuclear weapons," says Carrie Pester, one of the British plaintiffs. "This is only the first step." SUSAN JAFFE

Susan Jaffe covers environmental and defense issues for The Village Voice *and the* New Statesman, *and has written for* The Boston Globe, The Baltimore Sun *and other publications.*

UPCOMING SPECIAL ISSUE

THE BURGER COURT:
Its Record and Its Future Course

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

The Times's Favorite Janitor

The New York Times celebrated Labor Day with some kindly advice for organized labor, observing editorially that labor's decline in popularity could be at least partially accounted for by the fact that "it's hard to arouse sympathy for workers who earn $500-plus a week." On the same day the Op-Ed page did dredge up sympathy for at least one $500-plus worker, and you could easily see why. The worker in question was a janitor for General Motors who pronounced himself bitterly hostile to his union, the United Automobile Workers, and disgusted by the fact that he earns more than $30,000 for sweeping floors, even though he has an American Express Gold Card and a college degree. Although this same janitor, John F. McCarthy, proclaimed that his wages were "unconscionable" he did not say what he thought would be conscionable. Assuming that he deems the national median wage of $18,000 or so a more appropriate sum, he could always take the surplus $12,000 in $100 bills, glue them lightly to his outer garments and walk in poor neighborhoods until the populace had satisfactorily restored his sense of social worth. You have to hand it to *The Times*. With 65,000 workers in the five major auto companies still laid off, they find McCarthy.

Even the first Henry Ford realized that the better you pay your workers, the more likely they are to buy your cars. *The New York Times* has always had difficulty with this elementary piece of Keynesianism. How rich they manage to make "$500-plus a week" sound! It comes to $26,000, which is about half what the average *Times* editorial writer is paid for sweeping clichés from one end of the eleventh floor to the other a few times a week.

Millionaire Hacks

The vast salaries commanded by some journalists, particularly in television, regularly produce exchanges of comical hypocrisy. On the eve of the K.A.L. 007 anniversary, ABC's *20/20* offered an "investigation" by Geraldo Rivera, centered largely around the conclusions of a group of people understandably not imbued with the determination to review all the facts with dispassion: relatives of the deceased. The product was a disgusting piece of cold war manipulation such as one now automatically expects from ABC. At the end of it Barbara Walters confided to the audience with a doleful air that Rivera himself had been scheduled to fly on 007 on the fatal night. I suppose God thought that to dispatch Larry McDonald and Rivera at the same time would be overdoing it and so in His infinite mercy and compassion spared His faithful servant Geraldo. God moves in mysterious ways.

But Walters soon brightened and said that she was going to share with us her interview with the richest man in the United States, Gordon Getty. After much hoydenish parley Walters got Getty to say that he felt much the same as the next fellow, only his annual stipend had a few more zeros on the end. When it was all over Walters and Hugh Downs assumed the guise of Jack and Jill Lunchbucket and asked each other what it must feel like to be rich. Since Walters earns more than $1 million a year and Downs, probably $400,000, the very least *20/20* could have done was to flash that information at the foot of the screen as a way of helping viewers retain a sense of proportion.

A.O. Sulzberger, chairman and chief executive officer of *The New York Times*, has no coyness or shame about the system of property relations that have brought him to his pleasant station in life. "I come from the old school," he remarked to an audience earlier this year, "and if I were to talk to you about management styles, I would undoubtedly make an impassioned speech in defense of a most successful technique for newspapers—nepotism. . . . in its defense look across the country and tell me why so many of our finest newspapers share this common thread: *The Washington Post* with the Grahams, *The Boston Globe* with the Taylors and the *Los Angeles Times* with the Chandlers."

Reagan: After Nearly Four Years Many Questions Remain

The following item is based on reporting by James Reston, John Vinocur, James Markham, Michiko Kakutani, John Corry and Walter Goodman. It was written by Mr. Reston.

President Reagan has now been in office nearly four years. He seeks re-election and stands a good chance of being the first Chief Executive since Dwight D. Eisenhower to serve out two full terms. Following are some questions and answers about President Reagan:

Q. Is the President mentally infirm?

A. In recent times Mr. Reagan has been unable to recall the name of his dog or of some of his Cabinet officers. One of his staff has conceded that he dozes in Cabinet meetings. Other world leaders have had similar lapses of memory, particularly with respect to their subordinates. Experts acknowledge that it is exceedingly rare for a politician to forget the name of his dog.

Q. Is the President deaf?

A. Increasingly so, but White House aides have marshaled sophisticated technological equipment to compensate for this affliction, common in people of Mr. Reagan's age. For example, after each question at press conferences, the interlocutor's name and inquiry are flashed on the podium minisscreen in front of the President. The President can answer, "Well, Bob . . . ," thus deluding the public into thinking he is on a first-name basis with the entire press corps, when in fact he has not the slightest idea who they are.

Q. Does the President know the difference between fact and fiction?

A. There is overwhelming evidence that he does not, or—at the very least—that he sees no utility in distinguishing between them. Thus on two separate occasions he has claimed to visitors that he accompanied a unit that filmed the Nazi death camps at the end of World War II, although in fact he never left the United States.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Q. How advanced was Nancy Davis's pregnancy when she married Ronald Reagan?

A. The British edition of Trivial Pursuit, a respected authority on such matters, states that the First Lady was seven months from term. This information was omitted from the American edition.

Q. Does President Reagan believe the end of the world is at hand?

A. On a number of occasions in the recent past the President has indicated his belief that Armageddon could well occur in this generation, most likely in the Middle East. To take two examples, in the 1980 campaign Mr. Reagan told preacher Jim Bakker of the PTL Television Network, "We may be the generation that sees Armageddon." He said almost the same thing to Thomas Dine, executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee last October. The Rev. Jerry Falwell has confirmed that Mr. Reagan's concept of Armageddon is that of the fundamentalist Christian: the Second Coming, damnation for the wicked and paradise for the good. Texan journalist Ronnie Dugger, who has made the most determined investigation of the subject, cites a 1978 broadcast in which Mr. Reagan asserted his belief in the literal truth of the Bible, including Christ's walk on the Sea of Galilee and the parting of the Red Sea for Moses. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger has expressed his own belief in the prediction of the world's end made in Revelation 16:16, where the final struggle will be fought near the Hill of Megiddo in an area about fifteen miles southeast of Haifa.

Better Dead Than Red Department

At a Wheeling-Pittsburgh steel plant in Yorkville, Ohio, three officers of the United Steelworkers of America have been indefinitely suspended since March 22 merely for using the union local's newspaper to lead a campaign to get the local to withdraw from the Labor-Management Participation Team, a Japanese-type "quality circle." In a letter to all U.S.W.A. affiliates, an officer of Local 1223 reports:

> As you may be aware, our local has been forced to stop publication of our seven-year-old monthly union newspaper—THE 1223 EDUCATIONAL INFORMER, due to the unprecedented action of Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation in attempting to discharge three local officers, including the President, for their part in its publication. The basis for the attempted firings were articles that the company was displeased with. Needless to say, the NLRB has upheld our right to use our paper to state our position without management censorship. . . . However, to date, Wheeling-Pittsburgh has refused to acknowledge this decision and two officers are on 90-day suspension while a third is subject to discharge.

You will have noticed the immense amount of publicity the affair has received in a mainstream press famously imbued with a passion for free speech. It is doubtful whether this same mainstream press regards union newspapers as having anything to do with bona fide journalism. Union newspapers are hardly objective about the relations of labor and capital and tend, furthermore, to have a nasty attitude toward highly paid quill-drivers lecturing them about the vastness of a $26,000 wage earned by hand instead of brain.

Double Your Standard

On the matter of the mainstream press's passion for free speech I should note that Theodore White resigned from the National Press Club to protest the club's invitation to Louis Farrakhan to speak at a lunch on July 30. White also returned the club's Fourth Estate Award which he received four years ago. In view of the criminals who have enjoyed the hospitality of the National Press Club over the years, presumably without protest from White, it seems strange that he should have regarded Farrakhan as the ne plus ultra.

Uppity blacks seem to bother the old codgers. James Reston, who has kissed lingeringly the ass of certifiable mass murderers such as Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon, scarcely lets a week go by without belaboring Jesse Jackson. He even seems to think it an act of courage to do so, stressing time and again that Jackson has been treated lightly by the press, thus implying that he, Reston, is behaving doughtily in kicking Jackson's shins.

I imagine Reston and White, seemingly so sensitive to racism, would wish to join me in calling on Walter Mondale to drop his *Arab-rein* policies and permit his campaign to accept Arab-American participation and contributions. On July 27 the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (A.D.C.) protested the decision of the Mondale campaign to return $5,000 given by five Arab-American contributors in Chicago. The five were told that as "a matter of policy" the Mondale campaign was not accepting contributions from Arab-Americans. Can you imagine what would happen if a candidate said that as "a matter of policy" his campaign was not accepting contributions from American Jews? The Mondale campaign later tried to excuse its racism by alleging falsely that the five had regaled Mondale with an anti-Semitic diatribe in a forty-five minute meeting. Is it likely in that case that Mondale would have accepted the checks at the end of the meeting? Then the Mondale campaign compounded this chicanery by conflating the five Arab-American donors with the A.D.C., which it also libeled as anti-Semitic.

And if Reston and White regard support for the A.D.C. too risky, they might at the very least call on Mondale to repudiate the endorsement he received from *The Jewish Press* during the primaries. This newspaper is an ardent supporter of Meir Kahane, Brooklyn-born racist/fascist religious maniac, and has featured him as a columnist on occasion. If Mondale had a fragment of backbone he would repudiate any supporter of Kahane or the Kach Party.

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ARTICLES.

THE PRO-PAC BACKLASH

When Money Talks, Is It Democracy?

MARK GREEN

One autumn morning in 1982, I sat in the outer office of a Congressman from the Midwest, waiting to interview him about political action committees. The door to his private office swung open, and the lawmaker and a half-dozen men whom I recognized as representatives of the banking lobby spilled out into the reception area. Amid guffaws and backslaps, the lobbyists kept entreating him: "Are you sure you don't want the $5,000 contribution? You sure?" When he saw me and recalled why I was there, he stiffened. "You sure?" the bankers persisted. "You sure?" Forcing a wan smile, the Congressman continued to demur. Receiving a campaign gift on Federal property is a felony.

These days it's hard to walk around Capitol Hill without witnessing such scenes. Concern about the growing influence of political action committees has sparked a number of books and articles, including Elizabeth Drew's *Politics and Money: The New Road to Corruption*, first serialized in *The New Yorker*; sociologist Amitai Etzioni's recently published *Capital Corruption: The New Attack on American Democracy*; cover stories in *Time* and *The New Republic*; and a series in *The Wall Street Journal*, all charging that PACs are undermining the legislative process.

The attacks have generated a backlash. In the past year, numerous advocacy advertisements, Op-Ed pieces, studies and articles have attempted to make the case for PACs. Much of the material they present is the result of a well-funded offensive by corporations and trade associations. Their arguments deserve scrutiny lest they become accepted by default. Like popcorn, they contain a kernel of truth puffed up beyond recognition.

PACs are merely exercising the right of free speech. This assertion has been made by, among others, Eugene McCarthy, the American Civil Liberties Union and that well-known champion of the Bill of Rights, Mobil Oil. "When you cut through all the anti-PAC rhetoric," states a 1983 Mobil advertisement, "it becomes obvious that PAC opponents really don't want the voices of average citizens to be amplified."

Are PAC contributions free speech? Although money talks in American politics, that has always been the *problem*, not the idea. Money isn't speech; speech is speech.

And if money were speech, would bribery be constitutionally protected? If so, large contributors could effectively overturn the Supreme Court's reapportionment decisions; instead of one person, one vote, the standard would be many dollars, many votes. If a contribution can buy a legislative result and drown out the voices of thousands of citizens, free speech has been stifled, not encouraged.

PACs account for only a small part of all political contributions. As Richard Armstrong, head of the Public Affairs Council, a pro-business group, wrote in *Newsweek*, "The truth is that all PACs combined, including those of labor, contribute less than one-fourth of the aggregate amount spent on election campaigns."

But a PAC need not bankroll an entire campaign to be remembered by a politician after the votes are counted. Furthermore, aggregate statistics are misleading because the inclusion of candidates who get almost no PAC money pulls down the average. According to Edward Roeder, author of *PACs Americana*, the committees supplied 43 percent of the campaign treasuries of incumbents in the ninety-seventh Congress.

Finally, PAC money, like snow in the mountains, gathers at the peaks. A large portion of it goes to committee chairs and party leaders who are most able to return favors. In 1982 the House minority leader, Robert Michel, received 68 percent of his campaign funds from PACs; House Appropriations Committee chairman Jamie Whitten filled 75 percent of his coffers with PAC money.

"If you take inflation into account, campaign spending has increased only 20 percent or so in the past five years." So wrote Robert Samuelson in a review panning Elizabeth Drew's book last year in *The New Republic*.

Actually campaign spending has skyrocketed. Between 1972 and 1982, while the Consumer Price Index doubled, spending for House races increased 450 percent and for Senate races, 500 percent. In 1972 the average first-term representative spent less than $100,000; in 1982, about $300,000.

Consider the cases of John Culver and Peter Kostmayer. In the 1974 Iowa contest for the Senate between Culver and David Stanley, the opponents' combined expenditure was $807,037; when Culver ran for re-election against Charles Grassley in 1980, it was $3.9 million—a 487 percent increase in just one term. Kostmayer spent $58,000 to win his House seat in 1976, lost in 1980 and then spent $600,000 to win again in 1982—more than a 1,000 percent increase.

Business isn't monolithic, so business contributions have a diffuse impact. "Business rarely takes a uniform position on *any* political issue," wrote Armstrong. PAC critics, he added, "forget the many conflicts within the business community itself—big business versus small business, industry versus industry, free trade versus protectionism, and so on."

It's true that divisions will occur within an industry on specific issues. United Airlines and Pan American Airlines favored deregulation, while other major carriers opposed it. But such examples are not typical. More frequently, busi-

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Mark Green, president of the Democracy Project, is the author of several books on government and business, including Who Runs Congress? *which was recently issued in its fourth edition by Dell. He wishes to thank Michael Waldman of the Democracy Project for his research assistance.*

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ness does present a united front. A broad spectrum of corporations and trade associations contributed $2.5 million to members of the House Ways and Means Committee when it was considering an across-the-board corporate tax cut during 1981 and 1982. Did any steel company lobby for a stronger Clean Air Act? Did any commodities traders' group oppose the bill that gave a tax break to commodities traders? Was there a single used-car dealer pushing for the Federal Trade Commission rule mandating disclosure of known defects by used-car dealers?

PACs on both sides of an issue cancel each other out. "These guys are getting money from all sides," one PAC director told *U.S. News & World Report.*

This is an assertion without evidence. What about the other America—the one without PACs? A hungry black child in Brooklyn doesn't have a political action committee in Washington. Nor does an unemployed teen-ager in Memphis, a small farmer going under in Southern Illinois, a consumer paying more for a car because of protectionism in Dayton.

Indeed, on most major consumer issues—protectionism, farm subsidization, occupational health and safety, product liability, antitrust-law exceptions—the interested companies have multiple PACs, while consumer groups have none.

PAC gifts aren't inducements for future votes; they're rewards for a prior record. According to Representative Beryl Anthony, when he gets $5,000 from a PAC it "means somebody has approved of my past service in Congress" and nothing more. If a legislator's support for the special interest group's position *preceded* the contribution, how could it have *resulted from* the contribution?

Then why do so many PACs cross-examine candidates in questionnaires and in person about their positions on pending matters? As Amitai Etzioni points out, "Unlike rocks, people can anticipate; they can act now in anticipation of payoff to follow." And according to Jay Angoff, an attorney at Public Citizen's Congress Watch: "Whether a member votes for legislation because he has received money from a certain group or receives money because he has voted for legislation sought by the group, it makes no difference to the consumer. Either way, people who vote to further the interests of the business lobbies that contribute to their campaign continue to get elected."

The average PAC gift is too small to make a difference. Since PAC gifts to candidates average $600, even a lawmaker eager to sell out would be unmoved by a typical gift. Political scientist Michael Malbin observes that while several banking PACs gave Senator John Tower a total of $90,000 when he ran for re-election in 1978, his campaign spent $4 million; so banking PACs accounted for only 2.5 percent of the total. Malbin asks, "Can anyone seriously argue that Tower's positions were influenced by his greed for that bit of money?"

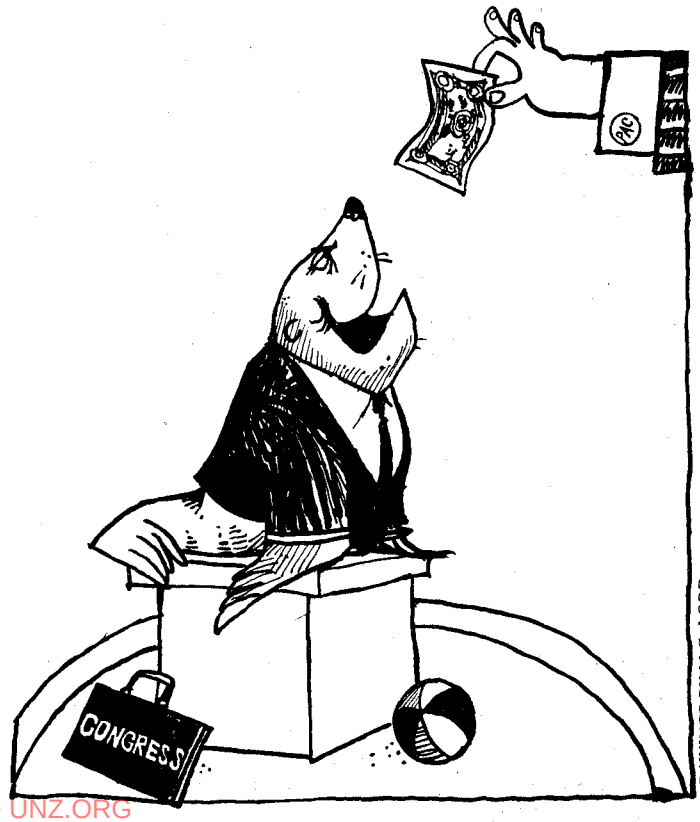
Even in Senate races, which are far more expensive than House races, $90,000 is still $90,000. And for a House candidate, $10,000 out of total costs of $300,000, say, is surely memorable, especially if it comes early in the campaign, when a candidate needs to show credibility—or late, for that crucial media buy. Four years after I ran for the House I still remember who gave me $1,000 contributions and at what stage in the campaign. How many members of Congress can't?

Also, the gifts that cause problems are much greater than $600. PACs are allowed to give a candidate a total of $10,000 ($5,000 for the primary, $5,000 for the general election). And PACs run in packs, matching one another's gifts and coordinating their efforts through industry networks and teleconferencing. Hence, Tower's $90,000.

Even a $5,000 gift isn't enough to buy a member of Congress. According to a Mobil advertisement, "That's hardly enough to corrupt a legislator, even if he or she were disposed to be corrupted."

To that Representative Tom Downey quipped, "You can't buy a Congressman for $5,000, but you can buy his vote." No PAC gift would sway Senator Ted Kennedy in his support of national health insurance or Representative Henry Hyde in his opposition to abortion, but most of the 600-odd votes a year in Congress do not involve such deep moral or philosophical commitments. As a Democratic lawmaker told *Newsday*'s Judith Bender, "If you're on the fence and it doesn't matter to you or your constituents which way you vote, but it matters to some of your biggest contributors, your mind is going to be made up very easily, because the vast majority of issues are not war and peace, equity and justice. They are really very different shades of gray."

Where's the smoking gun? Bernadette Budde, who has been associated with the Business Industry PAC for fourteen years, said heatedly in an interview with me, "No one has ever shown me one body—not one—who has sold his vote for a contribution."



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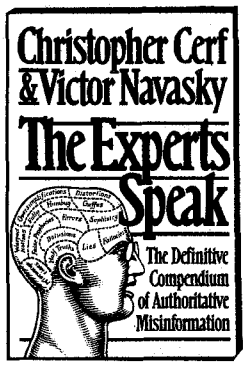

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In interviews with twenty-nine members of Congress, I was told about many "bodies." For example, when Representative Dan Glickman asked a colleague in 1982 to join him in opposing a measure that would forbid the F.T.C. from regulating used-car dealers, he was told, "I'm committed. I got a $10,000 check from the auto dealers. I can't change my vote now." A New York Democrat admitted he voted for the Alaskan gas pipeline, even though he opposed it on its merits, because "I didn't want the construction unions contributing to my opponent." When Representative Claudine Schneider tried to persuade a Republican colleague to oppose more funding for the Clinch River breeder reactor, he declined, explaining, "Westinghouse is a big contributor of mine." (Westinghouse is one of the companies that will build the reactor.) Another Republican, Representative Jim Leach of Iowa, said he once suggested to an urban Democrat with no dairy constituency that it would be most politic for him to oppose a dairy price-support measure and was told, "Yeah, but their PAC gave me money; I have to support them."

Numerous studies by Common Cause and Congress Watch have shown a direct correlation between members' votes and PAC contributions. For example, 92 percent of those who received contributions of $3,000 or more from five corporations supporting the Clinch River reactor voted for it; only 29 percent of those who received nothing did so. Nineteen of the twenty-two members of the House Ways and Means Committee who received contributions from commodity industry PACs prior to a crucial 1981 vote on a measure giving traders a tax break voted in favor of it. Of the thirteen members who received no money, eight voted against the bill.

PACs sometimes lose. As Simon Lazarus wrote last year in *The Washington Post*, "Business veterans of our most recent legislative wars . . . know that the real story of the 97th Congress was how frequently the new business givers lost big battles on the Hill."

Lazarus's Exhibit A for the ineffectuality of PACs was the 1982 "reauthorization" of the Clean Air Act, which was opposed by business lobbyists of every pin stripe. In extending the act, Lazarus argued, "Congress was simply responding to the voters, who—by overwhelming majorities, according to the polls—wanted to keep the Clean Air Act or toughen it." There is one problem with Lazarus's argument: because of the strength of the PACs opposing it, the Clean Air Act went through an arduous reauthorization process and was not made any tougher.

Measures that passed one or both houses due largely to a PAC push include the auto domestic-content bill, the legislative veto of the F.T.C.'s used-car rule, oil and gas deregulation and last year's retention of dairy price supports. Etzioni calculates that the 1981 "bidding war" for PAC favors resulted in an additional $177 billion to that year's tax cut—a substantial chunk of the deficit.

PAC critics have never asserted that special-interest money always wins out. Nothing *always* wins out. Occasionally a journalistic spotlight can stop a PAC in its tracks, as when the American Medical Association and its PAC unsuc-

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cessfully tried to end all F.T.C. regulation of the medical profession. Just as obviously, PAC gifts change the odds dramatically in favor of the givers. Why else do they give? Because they believe in good government?

PACs are public. They are at least an improvement over Watergate-era practices like passing cash-filled shopping bags and making secret infusions from corporate treasuries. "The signal virtue of the 1974 election law was that it required full disclosure of who is giving how much to whom," editorialized *The New Republic* recently. Critics should "concentrate on looking through the campaign finance and Congressional voting records to see who is in bed with whom."

No one is advocating a return to the days of Bobby Baker and Maurice Stans, but disclosure, however necessary, is not a sufficient step toward cleaning up the campaign financing process, for several reasons.

PAC men in bed with legislators do not receive the same media attention as, say, cohabiting movie stars. And disclosure isn't good enough if both candidates in a race are equally in hock to interest groups—a not uncommon occurrence, since almost all candidates accept PAC gifts. Finally, a Democracy Project study found that 20 percent of contributions to Republicans in close House races in the 1980 election came from business PACs that gave after the October 15 filing deadline. While legal, such quiet gifts evade the intent of campaign finance laws, for they avoid public scrutiny until after the election.

Public financing of Congressional races combined with overall PAC limits would be an "incumbent's protection act," especially since, in general, challengers must vastly outspend their opponents to win.

If that analysis by Representative Bill Frenzel is correct, one wonders why Congress, which is composed entirely of incumbents, hasn't enacted it long ago; and why the first two times it was tried at the Presidential level, 1976 and 1980, the incumbent lost.

The real incumbent-protection system is the PAC process, for the money goes predominantly to one party, the incumbency party, as Common Cause president Fred Wertheimer calls it.

According to *What Price PACs?*, a Twentieth Century Fund study conducted by political scientist Frank Sorauf, 67 percent of all PAC money in 1982 went to House incumbents and 64 percent to Senate incumbents, as opposed to 18 percent to House challengers and 23 percent to Senate challengers. (The rest went to candidates in open-seat elections.) "Most PACs have parent organizations, and most of those organizations have legislative interests and Washington representatives," observes Sorauf. "Supporting incumbents is thus a strategy of risk avoidance, of consolidating and protecting influence already won; it is the strategy of the already influential."

PACs increase political participation. According to a survey by Herbert Alexander, political scientist and campaign finance expert, 100,000 people gave to business PACs between 1979 and 1980. An advertisement sponsored by United Technologies calls this phenomenon "a welcome shift toward the grassroots."

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

National Security versus Individual Rights

Panelists: Floyd Abrams, First Amendment lawyer, co-counsel in the Pentagon Papers case; Michael McDonald, general counsel to the American Legal Foundation; Aryeh Neier, vice chairman, Helsinki Watch and Americas Watch, adjunct professor of law, N.Y.U.; Juliana Pilon, senior policy analyst, the Heritage Foundation. Moderator: Kenneth Bass, former counsel for intelligence policy for the Department of Justice.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Artists Experiences of Censorship

Presented with Exit Art. Artists: Hans Haacke, Michael Lebrun; Paulette Nenner, Martha Rosler. Moderator: Kenneth Friedman, editor and publisher of *The Art Economist*.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2

Images of Women in the Media: Censorship and Construction

Presented with Exit Art. Panelists: Margia Kramer, artist; Lucy Lippard, art critic, *The Village Voice*; Linda Nochlin, Distinguished Professor of Art History, CUNY Graduate Center; Carolee Schneeman, artist. Moderator: Mary Ann Doane, professor of film criticism at Brown.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4

Sex Education: Are Limits Necessary?

Panelists: Howard Hurwitz, board of directors, Family Defense Coalition; William Marra, author, *Happiness and Christian Hope*; Alfred F. Moran, executive director, Planned Parenthood of New York City; Susan Wilson, chair, New Jersey Network for Family Life Education. Moderator: Rita Ciolli, attorney and legal affairs correspondent, *Newsday*.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9

Pornography and the Limits of Toleration

Panelists: Susan Brownmiller, founder, Women Against Pornography; Irving Kristol, editor, *The Public Interest*; Harriet F. Pilpel, co-chair, National Coalition Against Censorship; Charles Rembar, author, *The End of Obscenity* and attorney in the *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Tropic of Cancer* and *Fanny Hill* cases. Moderator: Michael J. Sandel, associate professor of government, Harvard, author, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*.

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Individual PAC donors, however, participate in the least participatory way. PACs take small contributions from donors, but the donors have little if any say over how the money is disbursed. Representative Leach worries that since "groups seldom reflect the same collective judgment as their members, [the views of PAC managers], not the small contributors to their associations, become the views that carry influence."

And the way PACs raise money is frequently coercive. Consider how DartPAC dunned Dart Company executives with "donation guidelines," follow-up letters pointing out that contributions were being compared with salary, group sessions and finally one-on-one grillings. In 1978, according to Nicholas Goldberg in *The Washington Monthly*, 83 percent of Dart executives contributed, giving an average of $1,030, as opposed to 0.06 percent of the company's stockholders, who averaged $27.45 each.

PAC critics are simplistic—money is just one factor. In his review Robert Samuelson wrote: "Money is only one factor—and not always the most important factor—promoting inequality. Districts are often deliberately rigged to favor one party or the other. Well-known incumbents—with access to government contracts and power—face unknown challengers."

Of course there are other variables. Some candidates are cute; some are ugly. Some are lucky enough to run in 1974 if they're Democrats; in 1980 if they're Republicans. These are the warp and woof of politics, and they can't (and shouldn't) be regulated. But we can stop money if it is corrupting the system. That money doesn't always buy elections is no argument for PACs.

Also, money may be just one factor, but it's surely a substantial one, as any candidate running for office will vouch. A Congress Watch study found that winners of open seats outspent losers in four of five races in 1978, and that twenty-seven of thirty-three winning Senate candidates outspent their opponents that year.

Lee Atwater, former PAC coordinator in the Reagan White House, provides an insider's perspective. Atwater told Elizabeth Drew in 1982, "I think the story of this off-year election is that we've marshaled our resources and bought one or two Senate seats and fifteen to twenty House seats, and that's really good."

PAC defenders are trying to perform the political equivalent of making water run uphill. Despite the best efforts of cloistered academics and corporate public relations aides, it is impossible to deny that the swelling volume of PAC money is distorting if not corrupting the legislative process. As Representative Barney Frank has observed, politicians are the only people we allow to take thousands of dollars from perfect strangers and not expect it to influence their judgment.

Substantively, PAC apologists have lost the battle, but politically, they are winning the war. Many Congressional incumbents, of course, have profited from the existing system, and the President, who is unperturbed by the role of money in politics, refuses to consider any PAC reform.

If Ronald Reagan is re-elected, there won't be any serious change in the situation until 1989, at the earliest. If Walter Mondale, who has consistently denounced the influence of PACs on politics, is elected, reform will be likely in 1985. Given the tenfold increase in PAC money to Congressional campaigns between 1972 and 1982 ($8 million to $83 million), the difference between reform in 1985 versus 1989 may be the difference between preserving the House of Representatives and allowing it to evolve into a House of Lords. □

POLICE INFORMERS IN BELFAST

The Supergrasses Are on Trial Now

JAMES MURPHY

This May in Belfast the largest terrorist trials in the history of Northern Ireland began. Thirty-nine persons are charged with various offenses, ranging from membership in the Irish Republican Army to murder and conspiracy. The prosecution's principal witness, Raymond Gilmour, a former I.R.A. member, is the latest of a number of police informers, called supergrasses, who have been used in such trials. Their testimony has led to the conviction of almost 100 people and to long periods in custody for many times that number.

"Grass" is British underworld slang for "stool pigeon." The word "supergrass" emerged from a series of trials that took place in London in the mid-1970s, having nothing to do with Northern Ireland. Confronted by a growing crime problem, the robbery squad of the Metropolitan Police induced people involved in a wave of armed robberies to give evidence against alleged accomplices. The first supergrass was granted immunity from prosecution; subsequent ones have received reduced prison sentences.

The use of "accomplice evidence" has a tradition in British law. The dangers that it presents have also long been recognized, and safeguards have been instituted over the centuries to prevent miscarriages of justice. When a witness testifies against an alleged accomplice, the judge is required to advise the jury not to convict without corroborating evidence. Furthermore, the witness must be credible. In general, juries in the English trials using supergrasses have abided by the guidelines and have acquitted large numbers of the accused.

The supergrass trials in Northern Ireland differ from those in England. First, there is no jury. In accordance with the Emergency Provisions Act passed in 1973, "scheduled offenses," which include all violent crimes, are tried in so-called Diplock courts before a single judge. Second, it has become common practice to grant Irish supergrasses complete immunity from prosecution even when they have been

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charged with serious crimes. Third and most important, people are often convicted on the word of the supergrass alone.

The obvious result is a much higher rate of convictions. In the first Northern Irish trial using a supergrass, which began in December 1982 and lasted eight months, thirty-five of the thirty-eight defendants were found guilty. With only a few exceptions, they were charged with crimes that had no victim. One defendant, Elizabeth McWilliams, 22, received a three-year sentence for giving a photograph of a police reservist to the I.R.A. Rose Harvey, 71, was convicted of allowing her house to be used for I.R.A. meetings and was given a six-month suspended sentence. The combined sentences of twenty-two of those convicted amounted to more than 4,000 years.

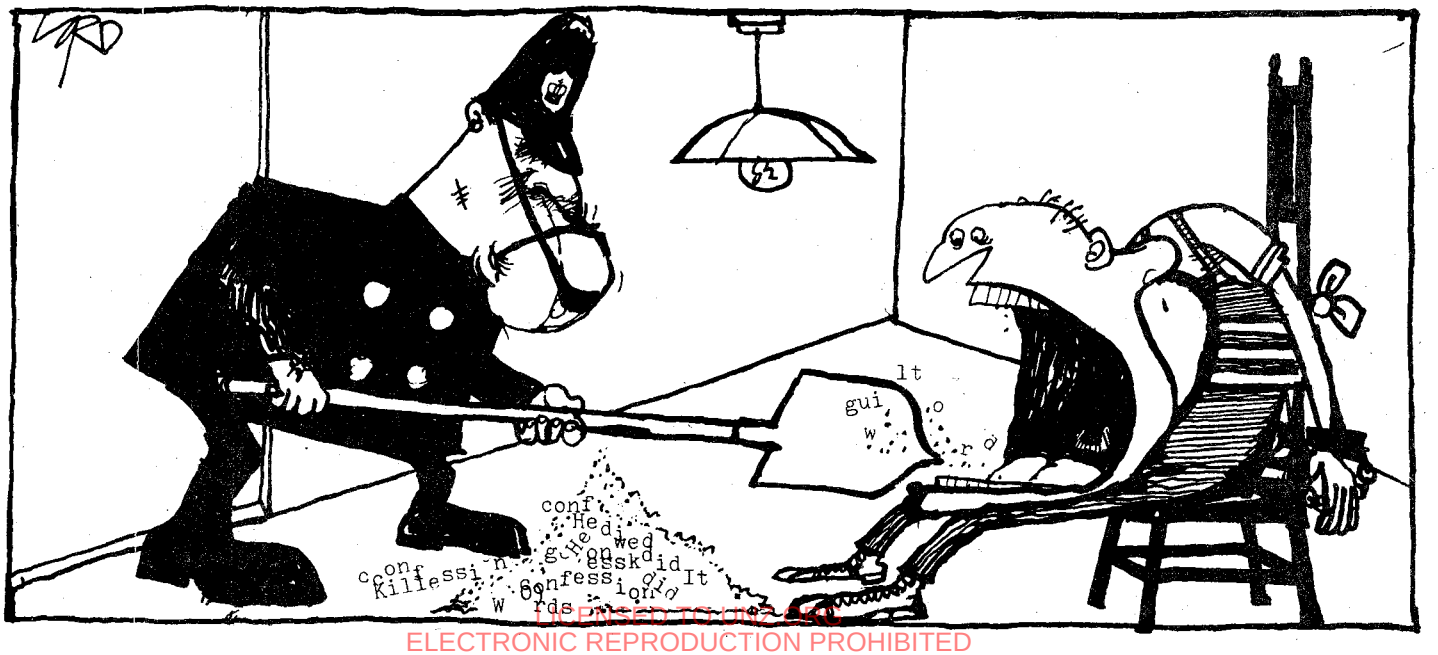
The case of Kevin McGrady provides a good example of the standard judges apply in evaluating the credibility of the supergrasses. In 1976, after being active in the I.R.A. for years, McGrady left Northern Ireland. He eventually settled in Amsterdam, where he became involved in Youth With a Mission, an American-financed sect that is rumored to have links to the Central Intelligence Agency. Under the group's influence he decided to return to Northern Ireland in 1982, where he agreed to give evidence against purported former accomplices. His testimony at a trial of ten alleged I.R.A. members, which ended in October of last year after six months, completely collapsed on several important points. His accounts of two murders, which he claimed to have witnessed, were contradicted by the testimony of a forensic pathologist, who demonstrated they could not possibly have happened as McGrady had described. In addition, one of the people he testified against was in prison at the time the crime was committed.

In his commentary on the case, the judge admitted that McGrady had lied about the murders. That, however, did not prevent him from convicting three people of other crimes solely on McGrady's word. The trial was particularly significant because the judge was Lord Chief Justice Robert Lowry, whose decision set an important precedent for cases involving supergrass testimony. Recently another judge found that supergrass Robert Quigley had lied in a number of instances, but following Justice Lowry's example, he sentenced two people to life imprisonment on the basis of Quigley's allegations alone.

Concern about the use of uncorroborated evidence has been growing not only in Northern Ireland but also in England. At the end of last year, an English civil liberties organization, the Cobden Trust, asked Labor Party barrister Lord Tony Gifford, an expert on civil liberties, to travel to Northern Ireland and gather information on the trials. He summarized the results of his investigation in a report that was published early this year.

The most disturbing part of his report concerns the relationship between the police and the supergrasses, and the possibility of forced testimony. When a person decides to turn informer, he becomes almost totally dependent on the police, Gifford noted. He is cut off from friends and family, most of whom regard him as a traitor. Needing the good will of the police to secure immunity from prosecution, he is, in Gifford's words, "in no position to resist any suggestions which they may make to him." Furthermore, it is common knowledge that the Royal Ulster Constabulary (R.U.C.) has long lists of people they would like to arrest but have no evidence against.

Although the police deny that they coach witnesses, former supergrasses have told a different story. One of them, Robert Lean, who was arrested on the word of an informer last September for belonging to the I.R.A., related his subsequent experiences to Gifford. Shortly after being picked up he was told that the police had information implicating his wife as well, and that she was going to be arrested and their five children placed in an institution. He was given the option of testifying against others, in which case he would be granted immunity. He was promised that after delivering his testimony in court he would be given a new identity, resettled in whatever country he chose and provided with a house, a private school for his children, a pension for the rest of his life and a job if he wanted one.



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Such offers are standard practice and present a strong temptation to suspects for whom the alternative is a long prison sentence followed by a return to life on the dole in a Belfast or Derry slum.

When Lean agreed, he was asked to sign twenty-one statements implicating people from his part of Belfast in various crimes. Some days later the chief inspector assigned to his case told him: "We will build the statements up. It will be like a book, chapter by chapter." When actually confronted with the accused, however, he could not go through with it. One of them he knew vaguely, the others not at all. As he told Gifford, he "knew it was all lies"; shortly afterward he signed an affidavit retracting his accusations. At least twelve other supergrasses have done the same.

Gifford is aware that Lean's account, standing alone, does not constitute proof, although he thinks that it "may well have been substantially true." Regarding the problem of trusting such a source, he notes, "That is exactly what the courts are being asked to do." But he "certainly would not approve the prosecution of any police officers for conspiracy to pervert the course of justice on the uncorroborated testimony of Lean."

There are, however, additional reasons to suspect the R.U.C. of coaching witnesses. At the first supergrass trial, informer Christopher Black made statements, delivered after a year in protective custody, that deviated significantly from statements he made shortly after his arrest. At another trial, supergrass John Grimley admitted on the stand that the police had given him the name of one of the accused. Grimley's testimony turned out to be more an indictment of the constabulary than of anyone else, and the case was dismissed. But by that time, some of the accused had already spent eight months in custody, which points up another feature of the use of supergrasses that has elicited strong criticism: the lengthy detention of people against whom the police have no substantial evidence. As soon as a person is named, he or she is taken into custody; many have been held as long as twenty months awaiting trial. Gifford reported of one man who has been named by five supergrasses in succession. Three eventually retracted their statements and the fourth was Grimley. The fifth is not scheduled to give testimony until 1985, by which time the man will have spent three years in custody.

The supergrass trials are only the latest in a series of extralegal devices that have been used in governing Northern Ireland since its establishment in 1921. For fifty years, the Special Powers Act enabled the police to jail people for indefinite periods, without charge or trial. In 1971, 1,400 persons were detained under that law. When the unrest of the late 1960s and early 1970s drew international attention to the way Northern Ireland was being ruled, the British government was forced to abandon internment and introduced the Emergency Provisions Act and other legislation.

The change was more form than substance. After being arrested, suspects could be held incommunicado for up to seven days, during which they were interrogated by the R.U.C. Despite persistent allegations that torture was being used to obtain confessions, judges continued to convict defendants on the basis of confessions alone, even when the accused retracted them before or during the trial. As the British government's Bennett Committee revealed in its 1979 "Report on Police Interrogation Procedures in Northern Ireland," 93 percent of all cases tried in the Diplock courts between 1973 and 1979 ended in convictions; of those, 80 percent had been based solely on confessions.

After Amnesty International issued a report in 1978 substantiating allegations of physical and mental mistreatment of suspects at the R.U.C.'s Castlereagh interrogation center in Belfast, judges became increasingly reluctant to convict solely on the basis of confessions. Eventually the supergrasses emerged. It is Gifford's belief that "a decision was taken at some level to make use of accomplice evidence to obtain convictions . . . and to allow immunities from prosecution for that purpose."

Just as the British government assured the European Court of Human Rights that there was no mistreatment of suspects at Castlereagh in the 1970s, it now denies any miscarriage of justice in the supergrass trials. Again Amnesty International has expressed its concern; this time in a letter sent to Britain's Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, James Prior, after the Black and McGrady trials. Its criticisms echo those made by Gifford in his report. Perceiving a threat to civil liberties in the use of uncorroborated supergrass evidence, Gifford has called for the restoration of the right to a jury trial for all defendants in Northern Ireland, an end to the granting of immunity to persons charged with serious crimes, new guidelines limiting the periods that people may be held in custody and legislation requiring corroboration of accomplice evidence in the courts.

So far there has been no response from the British government. On the contrary, after the latest trial ends (which will probably not be until 1985), an even larger one is scheduled to begin, in which for the first time a prisoner already serving a life sentence, Harry Kirkpatrick, is to be the principal witness for the prosecution.

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As long as the British government persists in devising more sophisticated methods of repression instead of embarking on a serious search for a political settlement, there can be no hope for progress in solving Northern Ireland's problems. □

THE OGADEN'S POLITICAL NOMADS

The Palestinians Of Africa?

JONATHAN B. TUCKER

Africa has more than 4 million displaced persons, but the continent's most intractable refugee problem concerns the estimated 1.2 million Ethiopians who have fled the scourges of war and famine into the neighboring countries of Somalia, Djibouti and the Sudan.

Some 700,000 of these refugees have been living in thirty-five camps in Somalia for six years. Most of them are nomads and villagers from Ethiopia's Ogaden region, a territory which was absorbed from Somalia into the Ethiopian Empire in the late nineteenth century and is inhabited largely by ethnic Somalis. Somalia has retained its historical claim on the Ogaden and has sought to incorporate it into a Greater Somalia, sparking intermittent conflicts with Ethiopia. Until full-scale war broke out in the late 1970s, however, the Ogaden nomads were able to follow the rains back and forth across the dirt track that marked the border between the two countries.

Following the 1974 military coup that overthrew the forty-four-year reign of Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, Somali President Mohamed Siad Barre decided to exploit his country's superior military position and seize the contested Ogaden. In July 1977 the large Soviet-equipped Somali Army easily overran the region, and for a time it seemed Barre had achieved his ambition. But in a seismic shift of superpower alignments, the Soviet Union abandoned Somalia and rushed to the aid of the new Marxist regime in Ethiopia—clearly the greater strategic prize.

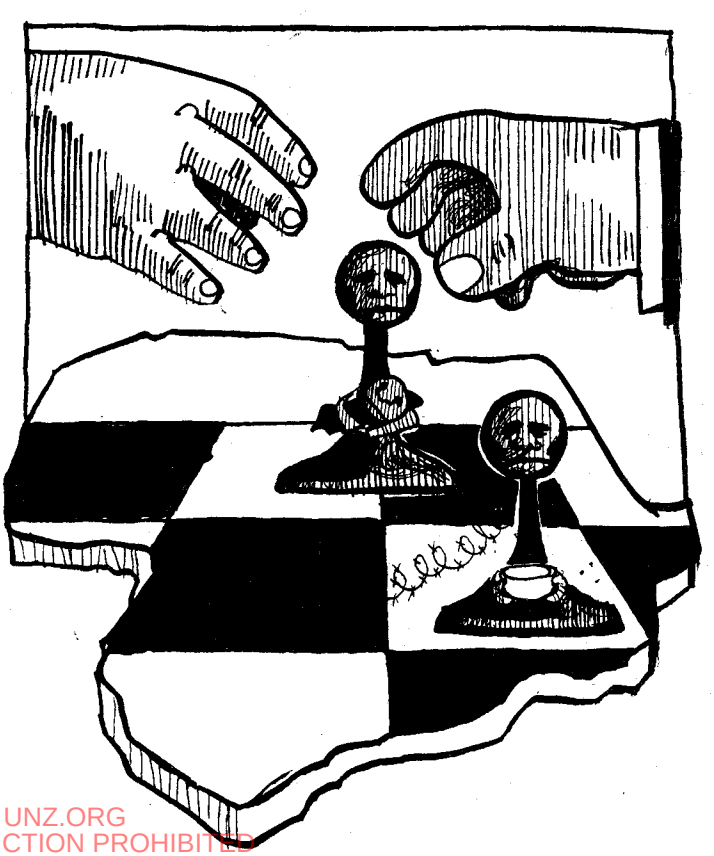
In a few months' time in late 1977 and early 1978, the Russians shipped and airlifted more than $1 billion worth of arms to Addis Ababa, as well as military advisers and about 15,000 Cuban troops. Soon the tide of battle shifted in Ethiopia's favor. By the spring of 1978, the shattered Somali Army had retreated, and the Ethiopians reoccupied the Ogaden, attacking villages and killing livestock in the process, and forcing ethnic Somali nomads and farmers to flee.

Six years of enforced idleness in the Somali refugee camps have driven the once proud and self-reliant Ogaden nomads into a state of dependence, and the generation growing up knows no way of life besides that of the camps. If the current situation continues, the Ogaden refugees will become the new Palestinians, doomed to live out their lives in limbo.

The reason for the long-running stalemate on the refugee question is the failure of Ethiopia and Somalia to make peace. Although the Ethiopian government has declared a general amnesty for the refugees, pervasive distrust and fear of persecution have dissuaded all but a few from returning. For its part, the Somali government announced early last year that refugees who did not wish to be repatriated would be integrated in local settlements. But Somalia is too poor in natural resources for more than a tiny minority of the refugee population to be self-sufficient there. Thus, unless they are repatriated to the Ogaden, which has enough arable and grazing land to support them, the refugees will have to rely for their survival on the charity of international relief agencies.

Skirmishing along the contested Somali-Ethiopian border continues, and though their people are suffering from drought and hunger, both countries continue to pour scarce resources into a military buildup. Somalia is not strong enough to risk another invasion of the Ogaden, but political considerations prevent the Barre regime from renouncing its claim. So Somalia has adopted a policy midway between war and peace, claiming that it seeks to protect the rights of the Ogaden Somalis against the Ethiopian government.

Further heightening regional tensions are the superpowers, which are arming both sides for strategic and ideological purposes, turning the Horn of Africa into a new arena of the cold war. The Russians are providing Ethiopia's Marxist regime with massive military assistance to fight insurgencies in several parts of the country, in-



Jonathan B. Tucker is a Boston-based journalist who has written about the Ogaden refugees for Horn of Africa Journal.

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FOOTNOTE ON AN HISTORIC CASE: IN RE ALGER HISS

This just-published booklet by author William A. Reuben identifies 114 factual errors in the Federal District Court of New York's 1982 decision upholding Hiss's conviction for perjury in 1950. This flawed decision, upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1983, stands as the last legal word on one of the most celebrated cases in modern history. 1 copy $5, 10 copies $40, 50 copies $150, 100 copies $250. Make checks payable to The Nation Institute and send to "Hiss," The Nation Institute, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

'WERE THE ROSENBERGS FRAMED?'

This historic debate, which was sponsored by The Nation and The New Republic at New York City's Town Hall last October 20th, has been described as "a political-literary brawl" (Los Angeles Times), at which "a cheering, jeering crowd of 1,500 followed every jab in a fight over history" (The Washington Post).

The main participants in the debate were: Walter Schneir and Miriam Schneir, authors, Invitation to an Inquest; Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, authors, and Sol Stern, research assistant, The Rosenberg File: A Search for the Truth; and Elizabeth Holtzman, moderator. There were also questions and comments from Michael Meeropol, Morton Sobell, Marshall Perlin, James Weinstein, Victor Navasky and others.

A complete record of this extraordinary event can now be purchased in transcript or cassette. Transcripts are available for $24 each; cassettes are $19 each. There are special discounts on orders of five or more. Send check or money order, payable to The Nation, to: "Rosenbergs," The Nation, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011 (a project of The Nation Institute).

cluding the Ogaden. They have also established a major naval base on one of Ethiopia's Dahlak Islands, located near the Red Sea shipping lanes, through which pass all oil tankers en route from the Persian Gulf to the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea.

Meanwhile, the United States is arming Somalia in an effort to counter Soviet power in the region and to enhance U.S. ability to send troops and matériel into strategic areas like the Persian Gulf. In 1980, the Carter Administration agreed to provide "defensive" weapons to Somalia in exchange for access to a major air and naval base near the port of Berbera, complete with a Soviet-built runway which is the longest in Africa. Because Berbera is within striking distance of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, the Pentagon wants to use it as a transit station from which rapid deployment forces could be airlifted if the oilfields or shipping lanes were threatened. Although there are no plans to station American forces at Berbera permanently, 2,800 U.S. troops participated in joint maneuvers with Somalia last August as part of an operation called Bright Star III; it included an amphibious landing near Berbera.

A satisfactory solution to the festering refugee problem can come about only with a comprehensive peace settlement. Ethiopia and Somalia need a lasting peace—if only for economic reasons—but that will require major compromises on both sides. Somalia will have to abandon its historical ambition of annexing the Ogaden, and Ethiopia will have to make concessions to its long-oppressed ethnic groups (especially the ethnic Somalis), who aspire to greater autonomy. One possible solution might be for Ethiopia to grant regional self-government to its restive provinces within a federal system. Although autonomy is no panacea, it would secure repatriation of the refugees and insure that the Ogaden nomads return to their ancestral grazing lands.

The superpowers can facilitate a peaceful resolution of the dispute by ceasing to exploit it. U.S. national security does not require a base in Somalia; the Persian Gulf and the sea lanes near the Horn can be safeguarded with naval forces already in the area. Further militarization of the Horn will only heighten the threat of war along the Somali-Ethiopian border (with the attendant risk of a direct confrontation between the superpowers) and forestall a peaceful solution to the refugee problem.

The United States could play a more constructive role by proposing an immediate moratorium on all outside arms transfers to the countries of the Horn, thus putting the Soviet Union on the propaganda defensive if it failed to comply. Money already appropriated for military aid could be reallocated to drought-related disaster assistance. More generally, the United States could negotiate with the Russians and interested European and Arab states to seek ways of preventing regional conflicts from becoming entangled in the East-West strategic rivalries.

Cutting off the flow of arms and lobbying for talks might well open the way to a peaceful settlement. Only then will the Ogaden nomads be able to return to raising their camels and livestock as they did for centuries—before war, famine and superpower intervention shattered their way of life. □

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G.O.P. Spectacular

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

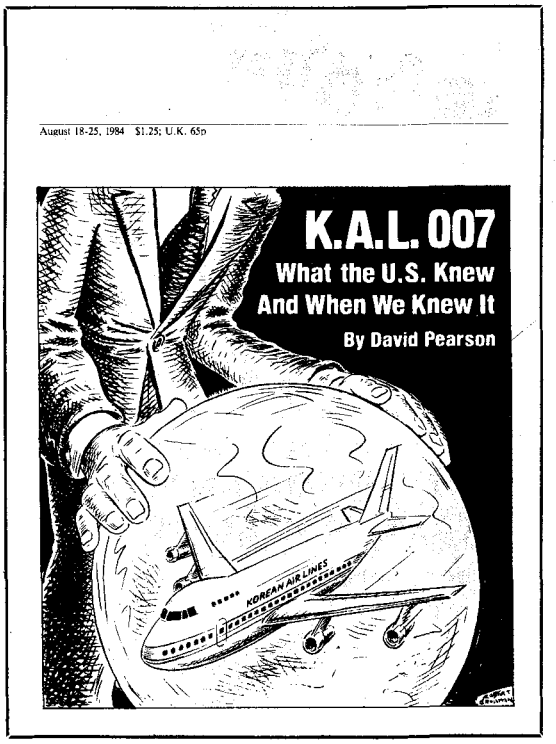
In Detroit in 1980, when one expected jubilation, I was startled to find that the mood and dismal phrases were much the same: William Simon informed us, "The hour is late and the crisis is near." Goldwater announced, "This might be the last Republican Convention." Henry Kissinger dwelled on "paralysis" and "constant humiliation" and "impotence," and others spoke of "agonies" and "values that died." Apparently, they had forgotten that Carter had revived the cold war and hadn't revitalized social programs.

Although the delegates of 1980 had reveled in the foretaste of victory, their orators perpetuated a sense of helplessness and dejection. So when the speakers of 1984 derided the Democrats as merchants of fear and misery, I marveled at the contagion of amnesia. And since quite a few people at Walter Mondale's convention had thought the platform rather conservative (some said Republican), I gently fanned myself while the Democrats were portrayed in Dallas as fiscal voluptuaries who would squander billions on "the social welfare complex," dismantle the national defense and betray flag and family.

Few were surprised when former Democrats like Elizabeth Dole and Reagan himself were hailed for embracing the G.O.P., but when Roosevelt Grier—the former football star who had worked in Robert Kennedy's Presidential campaign and was a McGovern delegate in 1968—rose to the podium to support the President on prayer in the schools, there was a murmur in the press section. Meanwhile, as a galaxy of speakers characterized the Democrats as "faint" and "feeble" (Elizabeth Dole), as "hand-wringers" (George Bush), as a coalition of "the wasters, the wanters, the whiners and the weak" (Gerald Ford), machismo seemed more crucial than ever to winning an election. Yet there was a contrast to the Republican Convention of 1980, which had resembled a war dance: then, many of the speeches seemed devised to prepare the public for war. This year, most speakers celebrated peace, apart from State Representative Judy Petty of Arkansas, who had not cooperated with the convention managers' request that she cut a certain sentence from her address: "There are some things worse than war—dishonor is worse, cowardice is worse, communism is worse." She was heartily cheered.

Indeed, more women's voices were heard in Dallas than at any previous Republican Convention: 44 percent of the delegates were women. The figure had been increased only because a number of male delegates had been asked to yield their places to women, including some wives of party leaders. At the receptions for Republican women, I witnessed a collective elation which was more pungent than the spiced sauce for the cracked crab. Despite the presence of many carefully chosen loyalists, there was probably more

Nora Sayre is the author of Sixties Going on Seventies *(Arbor House) and* Running Time: Films of the Cold War *(Dial).*



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diversity than the G.O.P. might have welcomed. Betty Rendel, president of the National Federation of Republican Women, conceded that the party would lose votes due to its rejection of the Equal Rights Amendment; however, she said that would not cost it the election, because Reagan had ended inflation—which means much more to women than the E.R.A. She also remarked that only one state (Indiana) had ratified the E.R.A. while Carter was President. Again and again, it was emphasized that the economy, education and war and peace are women's issues, and the delegates seemed pleased with the reiteration. It was rumored that many women at the convention were pro-abortion but were unwilling to say so in public. Nonetheless, I saw some buttons that identified Republicans for Choice. Reagan was constantly praised for the very recent bills on child-support enforcement, sponsored by Democratic Representative Barbara Kennelly of Connecticut, and women's pensions, sponsored by Geraldine Ferraro; neither woman received credit for her legislative exertions.

Over the chocolate mousse, I also met women who firmly denied that political issues had any connection with gender. Several related the sexual abuse of children to working women: if "those mothers" had stayed at home, their children would not have been raped. A real estate broker, who stressed that she hadn't "set foot" in an office until her offspring had finished college, suddenly volunteered that she was "worried about the lesbians." When I asked what troubled her about "their" politics, she replied that she honestly didn't know, adding wanly, "After all, there may be different kinds of lesbians."

Ferraro wasn't often evoked, but at the Eagle Forum's fashion show—before the wives of G.O.P. luminaries modeled sable, python and lace creations—Phyllis Schlafly said Mondale had overlooked "many qualified women" because they didn't belong to his party. On the podium, the occasional sarcastic references to Mondale's *running mate* made her sound rather like a running dog, except when Mondale was charged with hiding his record "behind her skirts."

Some Republican women seemed uneasy with one another: Molly Ivins, columnist for the *Dallas Times Herald*, divided them into "ultrasuedes" and "polyesters," and she noted the former's disdain for the latter. Still, I saw several middle-aged white women attempting to be scrupulously polite to their black contemporaries. After they struggled to find a topic of conversation, their relief was conspicuous when they hit on the importance of coordinated accessories.

About 3 percent of the delegates were black. Those I listened to echoed the refrain that I'd heard from some prospering black Republicans in 1976 and 1980: the Democrats had taken the allegiance of black Americans for granted, while delivering little to them, and the G.O.P.'s gift for "growth" would benefit black entrepreneurs, who would then hire and train more blacks. Legree Daniels, chair of the National Black Republican Party, mocked "more welfare and free cheese" as a "route to equality." Wendell Wilkie Gunn, an adviser to the President, spurned the Democrats' "message of austerity" and prophesied that Reagan's policies would bring about economic "opportunity for all." E.V. Hill, sometimes known as "the black Jerry Falwell," intoned: "We do not wish welfare, we wish our fair share. We do not seek aid, we wish trade." An observer at the convention, Lorn S. Foster of the Joint Center of Political Studies, a nonpartisan black-run think tank in Washington, pointed out that the key word aimed at black delegates in San Francisco was "jobs," while the word heard in Dallas was "contracts." Shortly before the convention, the Labor Department announced that the rate of unemployment had risen, and the Census Bureau reported that in 1983 the national poverty rate reached its highest level in eighteen years; but Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada assured us that "The Reagan Administration has done more for the needy than any in all of history."

The black Republicans' themes were repeated by former Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver, who participated in a panel run by Richard Viguerie titled "Are Liberals Soft on Communism?" After explaining that the Communists "have a vast apparatus in this country . . . where many agents have taken on American identities" in order to burrow into U.S. institutions, Cleaver warned that welfare is "a step toward socialism." Afterward, he told me progress for blacks requires "getting involved in the corporate sector" as embodied in the G.O.P. (At present, he said, he designs clothes, makes flowerpots out of cement and stone "to pay my rent" and wishes he "had met some Republicans before I went into business for myself.") Cleaver, who is running for the Berkeley City Council as an independent, stated that his predecessor, Representative Ronald Dellums, is unable to appreciate capitalism. A few hours later, I thought of Cleaver's subdued manner and discreet tailoring when a West Virginia alternate shared a joke with me: "Question: 'What do you say to a black man in a three-piece suit?' Answer: 'Will the defendant please rise?'"

Since television evangelists and Protestant fundamentalists had such a powerful influence on the platform, and the President's alliance with the Vatican had been stressed by his staff, Christianity was the ground note of the convention, in spite of the compliments paid to other faiths. I had expected that numerous appeals would be made to Jewish voters; the Republicans deduce that many of them have lost their taste for the Democrats, particularly because of Jesse Jackson's relationship with Louis Farrakhan. Yet only slightly more than 2 percent of the delegates were Jewish, and the platform's condemnation of anti-Semitism was fleeting. While several speakers, such as Jeane Kirkpatrick, affirmed the G.O.P.'s fidelity to Israel, the subject was not featured at the Convention Center. Elsewhere, at receptions given by the National Jewish Coalition, Republican leaders expanded on the party's "commitment to Israel's military strength over any combination of adversaries." Kirkpatrick said that the Administration had reversed some "obscene" trends at the United Nations, including "the effort to make Israel a pariah," and Edwin Meese 3d guaranteed that "if ever the U.N. expels Israel, the United States will walk out arm in arm." Otherwise the

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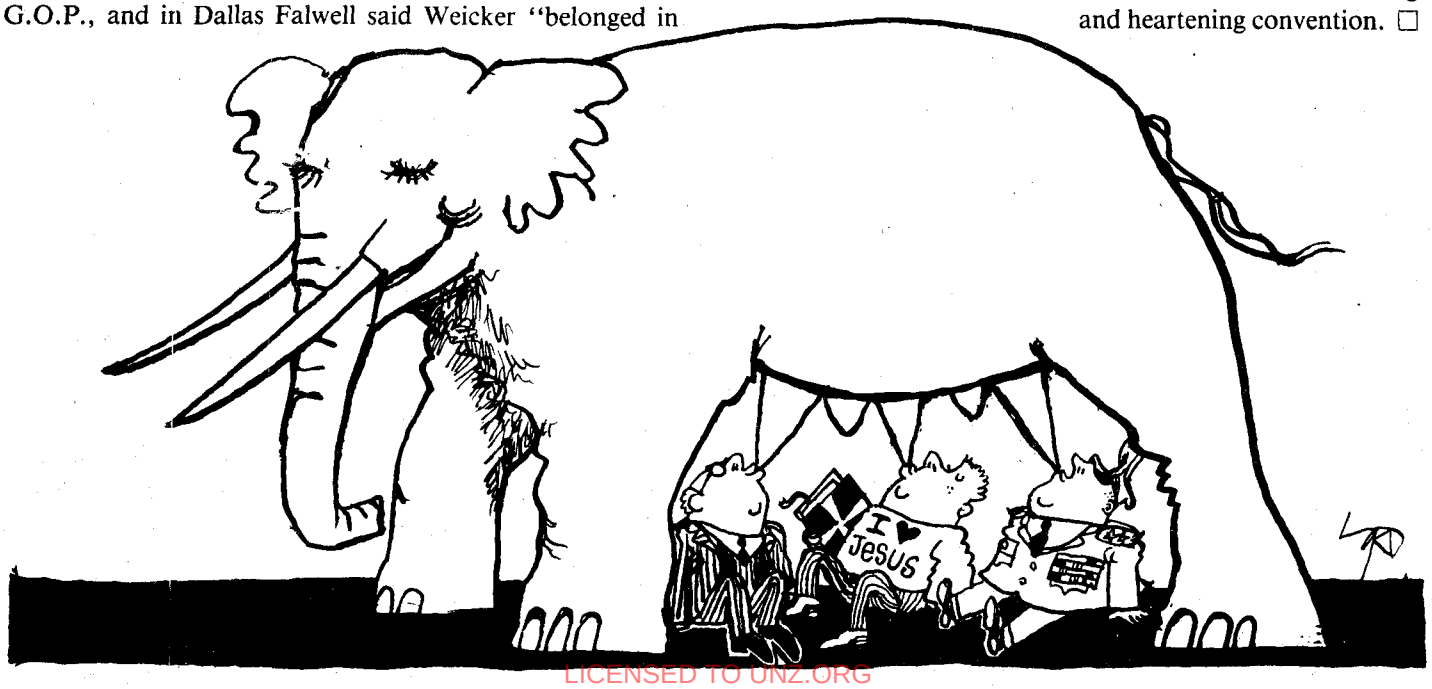
priorities of Jews were somewhat downplayed, perhaps in deference to the overwhelmingly Christian gathering in Dallas, or to the presence of militantly anti-Israel figures like Jesse Helms. And after Reagan's speech at the prayer breakfast on the last day of the convention, Rabbi Alexander Shapiro, president of the conservative Rabbinical Assembly, said that the President was "Christianizing" the United States and attempting to exclude "nonbelievers" from the democratic process.

Yet the most religious moments were generated not by the preachers, bishops, pastors and two rabbis on the podium but during the introduction and screening of the film tribute to Reagan. First we saw live shots of his limousine leaving his hotel for the hall; when it arrived, his face wasn't shown, but Secret Servicemen were seen emerging and adjusting their waistbands. So we knew that he had entered the building as the movie began, and that he would materialize before us when it was over. The jumbled images of a healthy and happy America that followed had far less impact than the emotional buildup to his appearance. An ecstatic suspense was created because the leader was coming, and I wondered if the filmmakers had studied Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. Pondering the devotion many once gave to Franklin Roosevelt, the reverence for Dwight Eisenhower and the romanticism surrounding John Kennedy, I doubted that any of them had inspired the degree of worship that permeated the hall in Dallas—which eventually ebbed because the President's speech was so long.

Between bouts of piety, I visited the small group of moderates who belong to the Republican Mainstream Committee, headed by Representative Jim Leach of Iowa. Their style was cool and restrained, but their language was strong when they deplored the rejection of arms control and legalized abortion; a couple of them called the exclusion of the E.R.A. "preposterous." Accustomed to defamation—three weeks before the convention Terry Dolan, chair of the National Conservative Political Action Committee, invited Senator Lowell Weicker of Connecticut to leave the G.O.P., and in Dallas Falwell said Weicker "belonged in the San Francisco zoo"—they stubbornly cited polls indicating that a majority of Americans, and Republicans, support a nuclear freeze. At a Mainstream brunch, a well-wisher quoted comedian Mark Russell's perception that the convention "runs the gamut from Jack Kemp to Jesse Helms." But the moderates seemed hopeful that their ranks would grow (particularly after some Republicans lose in the Senate and the House) and although they endorse the re-election of Reagan, they displayed an unwavering determination to recapture their party from "the religious right."

Of course the choice of Dallas as a convention site was a metaphorical commitment to the flourishing business interests of the Sun Belt. But from the residents I met I heard fewer references to local "winners" than to the Kennedy assassination, which had not been in the forefront of my mind when I went to Dallas—and I didn't bring it up, they did. Perhaps a residue of guilt lingers among some older people in Dallas because so many of them had loathed what the live Kennedy represented. A few younger citizens reflected that until November 22, 1963, the city had no place in history, and one suggested that the convention might give Dallas "a chance to get out of purgatory." And yet local TV stations kept running clips from the Zapruder film.

When I took the "Kennedy Tour" which was intelligently guided by a young man who possessed detailed historical knowledge—the Louisiana delegates on the bus were disturbed to hear that Dallas had been characterized as turbulent and reactionary before Kennedy's arrival. As we approached the Texas Book Depository (which had been set ablaze by an arsonist the night before), several advanced the theory that Lee Harvey Oswald had been employed by Fidel Castro and the K.G.B., and one proffered the idea that Lyndon Johnson had "arranged" the murder. The city should not be blamed, the delegates said as we rode past Parkland Hospital; surely no one reproached Los Angeles for the killing of Robert Kennedy, or Washington for the shooting of Ronald Reagan. Dallas was a wonderful place, they repeated, and they felt fortunate to be there for an exciting and heartening convention. □



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Before His Time

DAN WAKEFIELD

Whether in the classrooms of his popular sociology courses at Columbia University in the 1950s or in his increasingly controversial and widely read books, the late C. Wright Mills was a great teacher. In *The Sociological Imagination*, a guide to the pitfalls and promises of his academic profession, Mills taught that any writing "that is not imaginable as human speech is bad writing." That belief alone would have made Mills unique among American sociologists, and his own implementation of it helped him gain an audience far beyond the confines of the academy—and increased the enmity toward him within it.

When I was one of his students at Columbia in 1954, Mills's very appearance was a subject of controversy. In that era of cautious professors in gray flannel suits he came roaring into Morningside Heights on his BMW motorcycle, wearing plaid shirts, old jeans and work boots, carrying his books in a duffel bag strapped across his broad back. His lectures matched the flamboyance of his personal image, as he managed to make entertaining the heavyweight social theories of Mannheim, Ortega and Weber. He shocked us out of our Silent Generation torpor by pounding his desk and proclaiming that every man should build his own house (as he himself did a few years later) and that, by God, with the proper study, we should each be able to build our own *car*!

"Nowadays men often feel that their private lives are a series of traps," Mills wrote in the opening sentence of *The Sociological Imagination*, and I can hear him saying it as he paced in front of the class, speaking not loudly now but with a compelling sense of intrigue, as if he were letting you in on a powerful secret.

Against the awful image of Willy Loman's wasted life which haunted our dreams of the future in the 1950s, against the lock-step fate of *The Lonely Crowd* and *The Organization Man* which seemed to lie in wait for us after graduation, Mills gave us more hopeful possibilities. His withering critique of the stifling elements he saw in society (as expressed in *White Collar*, on the American middle class, and in *The Power Elite*, on the ruling circles) was not simply negative. The very audacity of Mills's attacks on the status quo carried with it a promise of something better. As his novelist neighbor and friend, the late Harvey Swados, reflected in *Dissent* in 1963, "the best of the young academics" and "many thousands of plain readers" here and abroad were drawn to his work because "they sensed correctly that, faulty and flawed as it was, the vision of Wright Mills cut through the fog and lighted their lives for them."

Though most of Mills's work and fame belonged to what Swados called "that unlovely decade, the fat and frightened fifties," he was, in his life style as well as his intellectual concerns and attitudes, one of the first harbingers of the sixties. Back in those undergraduate classes at Columbia, Mills enthralled us with calls to "abandon" the cities, which he felt were already hopelessly dehumanizing, and set up small, self-governing units around the country. There people could develop crafts and skills and work with their hands, as he was already doing, learning to repair his beloved German motors.

All this was more than a decade before the first communes were established and before the style epitomized by *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* became popular. At the time of his death from a heart attack at the age of 45, in March 1962, Mills was working on a proposal for the creation of a political consciousness and direction that did not yet exist in this country: he called it the New Left.

The vitality and continuing value of Mills's work spring partly from the fact that as an inveterate teacher he not only told us how things were but how they might be, and sometimes how each of us could help make them better. In fact, his stand was that as intellectuals we have a responsibility to make them better.

More than a quarter-century ago, in *The Causes of World War III*, Mills excoriated "the rise of the cheerful robot, of the technological idiot, of the crackpot realist" in both the United States and the Soviet Union, and he proposed a program of individual action to forestall a nuclear holocaust. Mills urged us to go on "expeditions" behind the Iron Curtain as representatives not of our national interests but of "intellectual and cultural values that are not confined by any nationalist boundary," and to engage in discussions "in full autobiographical candor" with "our opposite numbers among the enemy" in order to create new ideas and opportunities for peace. The message of that book is more urgent today than when it was first published, in 1957; it ought to be reissued and read by everyone concerned with the planet's survival.

I am grateful for the legacy of courage and enterprise that Mills has left us in his books, but I miss the man himself. I am sorry to say I was unable to recognize him in the first full-length biography of him, *C. Wright Mills: An American Utopian*, by sociologist Irving Louis Horowitz (Free Press, 341 pp., $19.95). Though the author claims in the introduction that he "tried to contact every living person who has first-hand information on Mills," he inexplicably neglected, in the course of some two decades of research, to get in touch with "either family members or Mills's closest friends"—this according to a letter in *The New York Times Book Review* from Mills's three children and two of his former wives, protesting Horowitz's "distorted view of the man who is his subject."

Horowitz's opinion of Mills has shifted drastically. After Mills's death in 1962, Horowitz considered him "the greatest sociologist the United States has ever produced," and in 1964, he described him as "the man whose spirit and zest for life inform the current political struggle for a better world." But the present volume calls him "a prophet and fanatic" whose "quite personal style led to a near-unanimous negative consensus about him." The invalidity of Horowitz's judgment is revealed in his description of Swados's memoir as "a savage critique of Mills cloaked as obituary." I offer the conclusion of that piece as an accurate assessment of the Mills I knew when I was his student, research assistant and friend, from 1954 until his death:

Dan Wakefield is a journalist and novelist. His latest novel is Under the Apple Tree *(Delacorte).*

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He was as combatively exhilarating as any man has ever been, he worked with the contagious wild passion of an inventor or a driven idealist, and when he was really dauntless he was the bravest man I have ever known. □

The Ropewalker

EARL ROVIT

TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE. *By Norman Mailer. Random House. 229 pp. $16.95.*

There's not much point in beating up on *Tough Guys Don't Dance*. In fact, both Justice and Mercy might agree that the proper response to this casual fling of self-indulgence masquerading as a roman noir should be indifference. We can, however, use the novel to explore some aspects of the writing business that Mailer's career illuminates: the difficulty of maintaining a healthy relationship between one's public and private personas, and the function of "story" for both the writer and his audience.

The first, as the more familiar topic, is a little too easily twisted into a polemical cliché. We think immediately about the corrupting effects of material success, and the co-optation of the rebellious spirit by a celebrity system in which the sentimentalities of show biz shape both performance and audience response. Given a fragmented population with few, if any, mutual concerns except getting and spending, ours can hardly be anything but a frenetic consumer society. This we more or less know; this Mailer—rather more intimately than most of us—knows very well. Since the publication of *The Naked and the Dead* in 1948, he has been one of our few heavyweight fictional properties—the Frank Sinatra/Henry Kissinger/Dr. Spock of the novel. He has been, for some thirty-five years, both a major consumer and a major item of consumption.

But the writer differs from the athlete, the politician and other media personalities in that the source of his power lies in his most private self. The successful application of that power depends on his ability to articulate his private struggles in accessible public metaphors—or stories.

A few of Mailer's contemporaries seem to have balanced the private vision with the public exposure, although at considerable cost (Lowell, Bellow, perhaps Updike). Some fortunate ones have been left alone long enough to assemble their work to their own intransigent specifications (Flannery O'Connor, William Kennedy). A few starry-eyed optimists, like J.D. Salinger or Harold Brodkey, kidnap themselves and hold the world ransom. But Mailer, more visibly than anyone else, has openly accepted the challenge of spectacular and syndicated celebrity, believing he can beat the system on its own terms.

I think he merits enormous respect for his egomaniacal determination on that score. Long before most of us, he perceived the hidden forces in the celebrity system and resolved to take them on, no quarter asked and none given. And he had the talent, energy, intelligence and ruthlessness to have succeeded. Thus, if we can locate the sources of his failings, we may understand a little better the complexities of our peculiar society. It is commonly said—and this in a sneering tone—that someone in Mailer's situation sells out (an odd kind of insult in a merchandising society). This, of course, is not only glib but stupid. The writer *is* a salesman of sorts, and the only way he can "sell out" is by offering spurious goods or by writing "for hire." Mailer has written a few colossally bad novels and some tedious nonfiction, but I doubt that he has any more capacity for hypocrisy than he does for humility; and if he has written quite frequently for hire, it has always been Mailer who has done the hiring.

A useful clue to the mystery may be found in Mailer's attitude toward "story." Even in an age of experimental obscurantism, with its aversion to sequential discourse, fiction writers are still, fundamentally, storytellers. But Mailer's trust in plot has always been signally slight. In *The Naked and the Dead*, the adventures of a single platoon in an ultimately meaningless episode in the Pacific theater provided Mailer with a built-in story line. For the only time in his novelistic career, he didn't have to invent too much of the story; all he had to do was observe and recount the behavior of his characters as the machined

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progress of the campaign was played out. And while doing this brilliantly, he was free to suggest all the nuances of psychological frustration and sociological conflict that so clearly fascinate him. It is surely no accident that his best work since *The Naked and the Dead* has been reportage, in which the elements of the story (characters, events, motives) are inherent in the material. In his novels, on the other hand, he has some obligation to create credible or at least interesting human beings, place them in a crosscurrent of events and point to some acceptable resolution of the conflicts engendered. But this he almost invariably fails to do.

Obviously, fiction writers differ widely in their attitudes toward plot, but none can entirely do without one. Monumental careers have been erected on very small stories, and vice versa. Hemingway, for example—far less interested in storytelling per se than Faulkner—wrestled his prose into greatness around the deceptively simple problem of what happens when one is forced to live with irretrievable loss. When he abandoned that story for a more sentimental version (a dramatic narration of the loss itself), the quality of his prose declined significantly (although his popularity with the media increased).

Mailer, however, has always been much more interested in descriptive and expository writing than in narrative. His delight in scenes of violent confrontation and in catalogues of sensory response is matched only by the overweening pleasure that he takes in explaining things—politics, psychology, metaphysics, sports, the etiology of cancer—anything that will offer him an opportunity for a prose riff of outrageous sonority. Both those kinds of writing, however—generally irrelevant to character revelation or plot development—may be concomitants of what seems to be the seminal Mailer story at the core of much of his fiction and nonfiction: how a man bears and deals with his panic. A crucial episode in *Tough Guys*—an obvious reprise of the ludicrous balcony-walking scene in *An American Dream*—finds the protagonist paralyzed with fear 200 feet above the ground, beneath the overhang of the Provincetown Tower.

Mailer has often camouflaged this theme with firecracker prose, surrounded it with pseudohorrific Gothic effects, and smothered it with hocus-pocus, homily and mail-order mysticism. But from *The Deer Park* to *Ancient Evenings* and *Tough Guys*, through political demonstrations, nominating conventions, prizefights and a fascination with the Kennedys and Marilyn Monroe that goes beyond prurience to sheer obsession, his writing instincts seem to be incited by situations in which someone is in danger of plummeting from a high place. Even more curious, he is not very interested in how the person managed to attain the height on which he totters or what value, if any, there is in his staying there. The accent is exclusively on the fear of impending fall and the accompanying rush which quickens a man trying to survive. Whatever supposed existential qualities this theme may possess, its preoccupation with the moment of terror and exhilaration suggests why Mailer's novels are so short on plot, long on incantatory rhetoric and perversely self-referring.

It also suggests why Mailer has been so much more of a box-office smash as a public personality than as a fiction writer. An incandescent success at the age of 25, he has outlabored Hercules (*Tough Guys* lists twenty-two previous books; he has made movies, founded

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The Village Voice, run for Mayor of New York, appeared on countless radio and TV talk shows) simply to keep from falling from that position of early eminence. And, in a sense, that's not only what all those labors have been *for* but what, at the heart, they've been *about*. For it isn't the moral question inherent in the quest for a goal or an interest in the tactics of survival at the top that engages Mailer in this recurring theme. Instead, he seems obsessed with exorcizing the vertiginous dread that besets the risk-taker after he has deliberately, irrationally overreached himself. It is as though Mailer had decided that his 1948 transformation from writer to celebrity was, in some arcane way, magical. In order to sustain the transformation (what fairy tale prince could bear a return to froghood?) he must force himself into more and more risks.

Mailer has been pugnacious, rambunctious, outrageously wrongheaded, but rarely stupid or dull—almost as dependable as *The Tonight Show*. But fiction is a less forgiving discipline than the electronic circus. Its standards for someone gifted enough to have perpetrated *Why Are We in Vietnam?* are especially high. If Gertrude Stein was wrong and literature was simply a compound of "remarks" and verbal gestures, Mailer's career would be sanctioned as a national treasure. As it is, however, Gertrude was probably right. Except for a very few times in Mailer's work, his novels are merely occasions for his public persona to perform. From that entertainment, the private selves of both writer and reader are excluded. Doubtless that exclusion has a negligible effect on the marketability of the product, but it is fatal to the sustained life of the fiction. And the losers, paradoxically enough, are more Mailer's readers than Mailer himself. □

Dock of the Bay

LARRY BENSKY

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SAN FRANCISCO. *By Chester Hartman. Rowman & Allanheld. 372 pp. $28.50. Paper $10.95.*

THE HAIGHT-ASHBURY: A History. *By Charles Perry. Random House/Rolling Stone. 306 pp. $16.95.*

At the end of an average cool, clear weekday—the kind of weather the city enjoys about 300 days a year—most of the people in San Francisco leave town. They eat lunch there; shuffle papers and answer telephones there; take pictures there; patronize prostitutes there; use drugs legal and illegal there; and, in general, perform the functions traditionally incumbent upon occupying armies. Then they go home.

Left behind are the residents, who clean up after the departed hordes; pay taxes so that an indefinitely expanding airport can continue to bring in more tourists; and grumble more or less good-naturedly about the lack of parking space downtown. Only when the tourist/business axis begins to creep out of its downtown-airport-waterfront corridor do those residents start to stir. But the way the game is played, they're likely to lose their neighborhoods as well as their parking places before they can mobilize effectively to keep them.

Since so many of San Francisco's inhabitants have historically been transient or first-generation, too busy with survival to enter the political process, those with enough money to manipulate the city's physical environment have always had a rather easy time of it. Despite a long-established forty-foot height restriction designed to preserve the city's famous views, a massive Manhattanized downtown office ghetto has been spreading unchecked for two decades. New residential buildings are most often view-blocking towers of glass and steel, and condomaniacs are converting more and more of the remaining rental units, again despite rent-control laws and anticonversion ordinances.

Several of San Francisco's historic "charming" neighborhoods have been destroyed in the process. Less visibly, the city's elderly and its working-class families have been exiled to the suburbs or squeezed into inadequate housing. Municipal services have deteriorated

Larry Bensky moved to San Francisco in 1968. He was managing editor of Ramparts *and now edits* MediaFile, *the monthly publication of San Francisco's Media Alliance.*

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drastically (at rush hour, buses on key inner-city lines are sardine cans trapped in traffic jams); public spaces disappear or are poorly maintained (the dying Golden Gate Park and the crumbling stadium at Candlestick being the most egregious examples); and such amenities as police, schools and municipal health care remain subjects of intermittent scandal and unrelenting inadequacy.

How all this came to be is a disquieting tale, pieced together coherently for the first time by Chester Hartman in *The Transformation of San Francisco*, a book which should take its place alongside Robert Dahl's *Who Governs?* and Robert Caro's *The Power Broker* on the American urbanologists's bookshelf.

Hartman, a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, lived in San Francisco from the 1960s until 1980. His work with housing rights activists who fought unavailingly to preserve one of the city's oldest neighborhoods is the subject of his earlier book, *Yerba Buena: Land Grab and Community Resistance in San Francisco*. The sad story is brought up to date in the current volume, which should have been required reading for the delegates at the Democratic National Convention, held on the now "redeveloped" Yerba Buena land.

When those activists began their efforts, Yerba Buena was a polyglot neighborhood of retired blue-collar workers, Filipino immigrants and well-established Greek, Samoan and black communities—more than 4,000 residents in sturdy old two-story houses and simple but safe residential hotels. Now it is a barren, windswept stretch of office towers and parking lots, indistinguishable from all the other soulless, deserted downtowns where "redevelopment" has had its way.

The profiteers and politicians behind the redevelopment of San Francisco from an earthy, blue-collar port city to a sterile, info-tech Pacific-rim headquarters are the villains of Hartman's tale. But it is a tale that raises a question that can hardly fail to interest those of us who live here: What would have happened if the machinations of the land speculators, lawyer-politicians, multinational investment front men and public relations associates had been known to San Francisco's voting residents? Would the close liberal-conservative split that has characterized the city's politics for the past three decades have changed? Could an environmentalist-labor coalition have emerged in opposition to speculative development, Manhattanization and neighborhood destruction?

We will, of course, never know, because San Francisco's supine daily press and moronic television news stations have, as Hartman points out, been willing handmaidens of the destroyers and profiteers, whose corporate interests coincide with their own. Only the relatively uninfluential crusading weekly *The Bay Guardian* has dared tell the truth about the demolition derby perpetually in progress, driven by grinning politicos tossing cash and patronage at anyone who may get in the way.

The major San Francisco media have only sporadically been willing to examine such issues as affordable housing, land speculation, church and labor union complicity in neighborhood destruction, political payoffs and conflicts of interest. But those same media can be counted on to explode in reams of prose and galaxies of images when a local "life style" fad emerges, be it human (the beats, hippies, punks, swingles or gay men dressed in nuns' habits who call themselves The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence) or material (waterbeds, hot tubs, fern bars or jogging shoes).

Thus, it must not have been difficult for Charles Perry, late of *Rolling Stone*, to resurrect from the newspapers and videotapes of the period the events of the late 1960s in the Haight-Ashbury district. He has done so effectively, laying out myriad daily occurrences in the style of a weekend feature writer finally allowed to break out of the daily reporting mode. Unfortunately, such a technique does not necessarily transmit the sense of an era, and *The Haight-Ashbury: A History* will not be the definitive account of the period, or the neighborhood. For that, Perry would have had to explore more lives instead of piling event on event.

Set alongside Hartman's account of the neighborhood destruction then taking place a few miles east, there's something terminally silly about the Haight of the 1960s. While 40,000 San Franciscans in Yerba Buena (most of them elderly) and the Western Addition

STAUNCH

See *faithful*; *seaworthy*, *watertight*,
for what is kept out
or sometimes in, like lifeblood or sadness
or inappropriate
bursts of affection that might confuse
someone close to us,
like the oppressiveness of a warm day
in February
when we're bandaged in wool. That might confuse
us, even, if we
didn't hold on to ourselves like our own
mothers, murmuring,
rocking, palming our opposite shoulders.
Faithful to what?
To the going, to the river green
as veins, as if
our skin mapped the route if we had the wit
to read it. No
wonder we sometimes sleep too much, without
even stopping
to haul our little boats out of the water,
then wake in the dark
with no way to know if this is Cape Horn
or Cape Fear,
the Cape of Good Hope or the Lesser
Antilles, until
we stand on dry land. Even then, how much
will we have to go on,
with the stars spilling mute through our fingers?

Sharon Bryan

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(most of them black) were trying to figure out where they would live after bulldozers turned their homes into vacant lots (many of them still vacant), 75,000 "summer of love" immigrants were deep into their own heads, facing such crucial choices as whether to wear patchouli or sandalwood oil as a complement to the notorious flowers in their hair.

Perry gives a good sense of the stop-start attempts to build an effective community in the Haight, but he is too convinced that good intentions count as much as results:

> The Haight was almost inhumanly serious minded and nobly intentioned. The problems it grappled with were acknowledged as some of the most serious of the day, and it was also bravely trying to deal with the great issues directly raised by the completely uncharted world of psychedelics. The Haight was not merely wrestling with the problems of war and technology and human nature on an intellectual level, but was also risking health and sanity and future and life itself in pursuit of answers. The Haight-Ashbury was not just a bunch of people getting stoned. It was heroic.

Those "heroes" retreated, just another wave on San Francisco's long-suffering shores, when the combination of speed-laced LSD, cheap marijuana, deafening music and exquisitely inapplicable Far Eastern philosophy wore off. Of those who stayed (or even those who left), there is insufficient detail in Perry's book. If such a fundamentally individualistic experience as the Haight-Ashbury in the late 1960s is to make sense to those who weren't around to witness it, more than a chronology of events and where-are-they-now capsules is necessary.

Apart from questions of urban transformation and life-style peculiarities, there remains something alluring about San Francisco that neither of these books totally captures. Like all cities, it has always been a place to make and spend money. But beyond that, an extraordinary amount of its frontier mentality endures—a sense of the quintessential gold-rush town where identities can be shed, fortunes accumulated, friends/lovers acquired and unacquired overnight, buildings demolished and constructed just as rapidly, and the illusion maintained all the while that something special is going on, something not possible back home, whether that home be Dubuque, Managua or Hong Kong.

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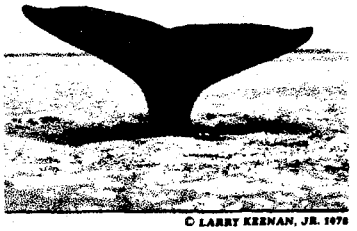

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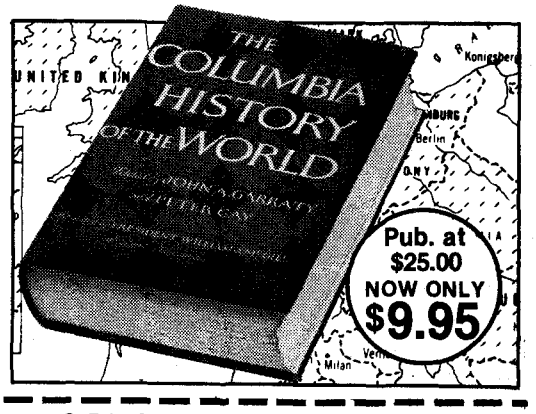

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It is odd that in an area where authors, documentarians and poets abound, there is such a paucity of work dedicated to representing the threads of charm, tragedy and impermanence that are woven so richly into San Francisco's brief history. The classic explanation for this may be correct: those who might best chronicle the city's life are too busy enjoying it to do so. □

Gimme Shelter

EVE OTTENBERG

AMERICA'S HOUSING CRISIS: What Is to Be Done? *Edited by Chester Hartman. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 249 pp. $9.95.*

Let's make no mistake about it: the publication of *America's Housing Crisis* can only be to the general good. Few worthwhile books even exist on the subject. Now, more than ever, they are needed. At the bottom of society, homelessness has become a national epidemic. Among the middle and even upper-middle classes, home mortgage defaults have soared to an all-time high. Little affordable housing is under construction. What already stands consumes more and more of the average wage-earner's income. In short, the world's wealthiest nation is failing miserably to cope with one of the most basic human needs.

Yet few have seen fit to write about it. Affordable housing is about as glamorous as affordable transportation. So along comes *America's Housing Crisis* (funded in part by the Institute for Policy Studies), chock-full of statistics, legal history, political advice, and it has this most unfashionable arena nearly all to itself. Despite some flaws, this collection of essays does a serviceable job.

The statistics are staggering. The lead article, by Cushing Dolbeare, shows that by 1980, 7 million American households "paid more than 50 percent of their income for housing. Almost 70 percent of those households were renters and their median household income was between $4,000 and $5,000 a year." That sounds like poverty to me, especially considering that many of those "households" were whole families. At the other end of the social spectrum, in 1979 almost 60 percent of the value of mortgage deductions went to taxpayers in the top 10 percent of the income distribution. According to Florence Wagman Roisman's essay, later in 1982, thirty public housing authorities reported a total of 268,550 households on their waiting lists. Michael Stone comments that "during the 1950s, about two-thirds of all families could have afforded the typical new house; by 1970 the proportion had declined to one-half, by 1976 to just one-fourth, and *by 1981 to less than one-tenth.*" (Emphasis added.) Articles by Paul Davidoff and Chester Hartman make similar points. John Atlas and Peter Dreier observe that by 1978 the average price of a house in California was $100,000. Emily Paradise Actenberg and Peter Marcuse note that for renters, "housing costs are increasing almost twice as fast as incomes." In other words, something disastrous is happening, and that something is happening very fast.

More precisely, our standard of living has dropped. And it is one of the shortcomings of this book that it does not better emphasize the decline. After all, the co-op and condo boom of the 1970s caused a transfer of wealth—*out* of middle-class pocketbooks—the like of which is rarely seen. The convulsion in the value of real estate is perhaps the major change in the economic lives of most citizens at the end of the twentieth century. But we read little about it in *America's Housing Crisis*. Instead there is much meritorious research on matters such as the tenants' movement. There is also a call for the "decommodification of housing": "The objective, broadly stated, is to limit the role of profit from decisions affecting housing, substituting instead the basic principle of socially determined need"—to which I can only add, Hear, hear. Still, something is wrong with the historical perspective of these essays. The authors marshal all the facts, figures, hypotheses and arguments of recent years, and present them, perhaps out of habit, as part of a historical continuum, whereas the most arresting fact of the situation is that of discontinuity and disruptive change. There has been a break with the past.

Meanwhile, familiar topics make their expected appearance here. For those who wonder at the status of the debate on mortgage interest deductions, it should come as no surprise that these I.P.S. writers generally favor abolishing them. That seems sensible enough. But a candidate running on such a platform would be committing political suicide. Then, too, there is some unhappy truth to the right-wing contention that those deductions motivate people in a way that direct assistance apparently does not. So Dolbeare's astonished indignation at the contrast between the growth of these deductions and the decline of outlays for housing assistance seems counterproductive—a rhetorical trope expressly designed not to capture the hearts and minds of the masses the author hopes to organize. It is hard to avoid concluding that if action is Dolbeare's true aim, he should stay away from denunciations of homeowner deductions and repeat instead that only the wealthiest benefit from them.

And what of every American's dream of owning a house? That national appetite, invoked by our campaigning President, gets no serious treatment in *America's Housing Crisis*. Indeed, Dolbeare argues that homeowner tax preferences "distort the housing market choices in favor of residential construction suitable for homeowners, creating a demand for more single-family homes and apartments for purchase than for rental units," as if it is only the tax code that makes people want to own a home. The popularity, despite tremendous odds, of low-income co-ops in big cities and of urban homesteading should dispell that illusion at once. People with very low, even nearly nonexistent incomes flock to urban homesteading programs. Often they go into hock to do so. And you can bet it is not the prospect of a tax break on an income they do not have that draws them. They don't like renting, and for some very sound reasons. Similarly, the fact that mortgage debt had reached 60 percent of disposable personal income by 1980, as Michael Stone reports, reveals that people are willing to spend nearly anything to own a home.

John Atlas and Peter Dreier's "Mobilize Or Compromise? The Tenants' Movement and American Politics" includes a comprehensive list of tenant unions and a record of their efforts which should be useful to tenant organ-

Eve Ottenberg writes the "Hard Times" column for The Village Voice.

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izers. More on the now nearly forgotten history of rent controls—commercial and residential—enacted during World War II would have been nice. Otherwise, "Mobilize Or Compromise?" represents what is most admirable in this book: a jumble of relevant detail, passion and utopian vision.

That said, I must confess that large portions of this tome are nearly unreadable. The social science jargon that buries whole paragraphs in a mountain of meaningless verbiage is particularly dispiriting. Then there is the insider's lingo, gumming up even the simplest sentence: "How then can the sliding scale of affordability and the shelter poverty concept be operationalized?"

Had these writers sharpened their prose just a bit, the issues they discuss would have become accessible to many instead of just a few. It's a shame they didn't, because *America's Housing Crisis* is a mine of information for anyone even remotely concerned with the problem. Which means everyone, except the rich. □

FILMS.

ANDREW KOPKIND

Red Dawn

One morning in the not-too-distant present—McDonald's has served over 45 billion burgers and Brezhnev's picture still adorns Soviet office walls—Americans wake up to find: NATO dissolved and Western Europe turned pacifist and neutral; the Greens in power in Bonn and Pershing 2s banned from West German soil; the United States and the Soviet Union locked in a de facto nuclear freeze; Nicaragua armed to withstand a U.S. invasion; the oligarchy overthrown in El Salvador and the military crushed in Honduras; Mexico's aborted revolution successfully revived; and free showings of Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* scheduled at theaters in American towns from El Paso to Butte. In other words, *The Nation*'s political project is being put into practice on a global scale.

So far so good. The premise of *Red Dawn*, which is announced before the titles in a series of punchy Brechtian headlines, may be hilariously implausible, but it's hardly worth the worry expended by liberal critics, who take director/writer John Milius too much

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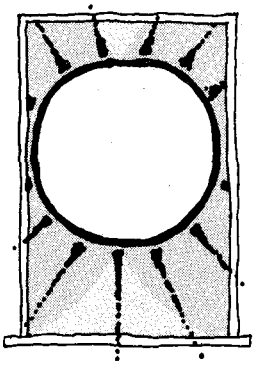

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at his word, fearing that this campy teen adventure is the first salvo of the coming fascist *Kulturkampf*. Not to worry; Milius is no Goebbels. When he hears the word "Hollywood" he reaches for his guns, but his intentions are more mischievous than murderous and his message is remarkably mixed.

Inevitably, an irksome contradiction impinges on the extraordinary scenario of world-historical events that opens the film. World War III starts when a Cuban-Nicaraguan-Soviet commando force drops into a small town in the Rockies, accompanied by an off-screen nuclear first strike against Omaha, Washington, D.C., and other expendable targets. The strange invaders land on the grounds of the high school in Calumet, Colorado, where a black teacher is in the middle of a lecture about medieval Mongolian hordes and the depredations of Genghis Khan. He's the first to get blown away. Having dispatched that irony, the commandos pretty much demolish the community and subjugate its terrified inhabitants.

The extremely fast times at Calumet High spin off the adventure plot. A small band of boys, players and fans of the Wolverines football team, escapes to the hills in a pickup, stopping at the local sporting goods store along the way for guns and ammo. Presently they are joined by two teen-age girls, and the new Wolverines terrorist front swings into action. They blow up tanks with captured rockets, lure enemy soldiers into lethal ambushes and generally play such brilliant guerrilla games that a General Giap or a George Habash would be envious.

If you swivel the politics about 45 degrees to the left, *Red Dawn* begins to look more like a celebration of people's war than a horror movie about the evil empire. For all his Zen fascism, or whatever he calls it, Milius has produced the most convincing story about popular resistance to imperial oppression since the inimitable *Battle of Algiers*. He has only admiration for his guerrilla kids, and he understands their motivations—and excuses their naïveté—far better than the hip liberal filmmakers of the 1960s counterculture. I'd take the Wolverines from Colorado over a small circle of friends from Harvard Square in any revolutionary situation I can imagine.

At the same degree off center, the relationships of fish to sea, and of fish to fish, are realistically if simply drawn. The Calumet townsfolk surrender because resistance from their small urban base is impossible; armed struggle is conceivable only from the sierra. The groveling Mayor clings to his role as a collaborationist, and the resident floozies flock to the macho aggressors. Merchants try to pursue business as usual, and a few brave souls do what they can to help the guerrillas.

The imperialists behave like beasts when their power is threatened. They shoot the natives in retaliation for Wolverine raids, and they detain and execute potential protest leaders in a nice restatement of the Phoenix program used by the C.I.A. in Vietnam. Although the Wolverines' terrorism makes life difficult for their countrymen, the guerrillas will not repudiate their tactics. Terror is their only weapon.

The invaders argue among themselves. The Cuban captain (Ron "Superfly" O'Neal, the film's most charming and convincing character) is a veteran adviser to people's wars from Indochina to Angola, and he comes to sympathize more with the guerrillas than with the Second World commissars who oversee the occupation of Calumet. "Now I'm just like you—a policeman," he sneers at the Rasputin of a Russian officer who gives the orders. The Cuban knows all about hearts and minds, and in the end he remains the most rounded and humane warrior in the film.

The teen guerrillas have their fallings out as well. One girl rails against a male comrade for his petty chauvinism ("Did I do something wrong?" he pathetically rejoins); a boy allows his father, the Mayor, to turn him into a mole; they all have a terrible time snuffing the traitor in their midst when the deed must be done. When one young guerrillero worries, "That's what *they'd* do," another counters, "Yeah, but we live here." The territorial imperative is stronger than any doctrine. As always, the Wolverines' politics grow out of the barrels of their guns.

Guns are fun in the mountains, and the good guys handle theirs lovingly. The one clear point to the movie is that the National Rifle Association is dead right. When the invaders take Calumet, they seize the firearms registration records and arrest everyone who owns a piece, proving that guns don't kill people; gun registration does. A bumper sticker underscores the idea: "They can have my gun when they pry it from my cold dead fingers."

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The rest of the politics is much more obscure than the Cyrillic-script advertisements suggest or literal-minded audiences infer. There's not much talk about ideology or economic systems, or even good guys against bad ones. A U.S. Air Force pilot who parachutes into the Wolverines' camp tells the kids the big war started because the "two tough guys on the block" were itching for a fight. In other words, there is not much difference between the First World and the Second, and the moral high ground must be located in the Third. Communist revolutionaries may disagree, and it does seem too pat to put a plague on both big houses, but that political position is not so different from the one taken by the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, for instance.

There are some other problems. The easy feminism of the guerrilla campfire hides a deeper mystification of sex and violence: the women are enigmatic animals, able to kill themselves and others with cold passion. The examples of Third World revolutionary tigresses and New Left terror queens have made their imprint on Milius's imagination. And then there's the nutty notion that Nicaragua could invade America, fair play though such a turnaround would be.

If you read *Red Dawn* as a parable of American intervention in Central America, say, or even an evocation of what might have happened in Poland if the Russians had moved in to crush Solidarity, it's not so hideous. Certainly there's nothing here that should encourage adherence to the Republican platform or a vote for Reagan. The movie cannot be seen as propaganda for a bigger defense budget; the partisans (as they're called at the movie's end) do not need Tridents or B-1 bombers. Simpson-Mazzoli—never a great piece of immigration law—gets an oblique pan: "They opened up the door down there and the Mexicans, Nicaraguans and Cubans poured in," someone remembers. But the eye and ear of the moviegoer can make of *Red Dawn* what they like. Some of it is strong stuff, but who, after watching the goings on in Dallas last month, can disagree wholeheartedly with the disembodied voice from a loudspeaker at the Calumet re-education camp: "America is a whorehouse where the ideals of your forefathers are prostituted." Maybe Milius believes that too. □

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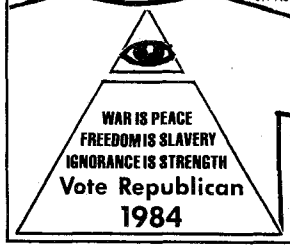

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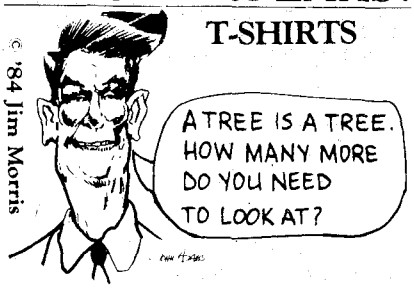

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N	O	V	E	N	A	S	■	U	N	I	F	O	R	M
U	■	E	■	G	■	I	■	L	■	S	■	V	■	E
P	A	R	A	L	L	E	L	E	P	I	P	E	D	■
G	■	E	■	O	■	S	■	D	■	N	■	R	■	M
I	N	T	I	M	A	T	E	■	S	T	A	B	L	E
R	■	■	■	E	■	■	■	■	E	■	■	■	■	S
L	I	V	E	R	Y	■	C	O	N	G	E	S	T	S
S	■	I	■	A	■	T	■	X	■	R	■	P	■	E
■	C	E	N	T	R	A	L	I	Z	A	T	I	O	N
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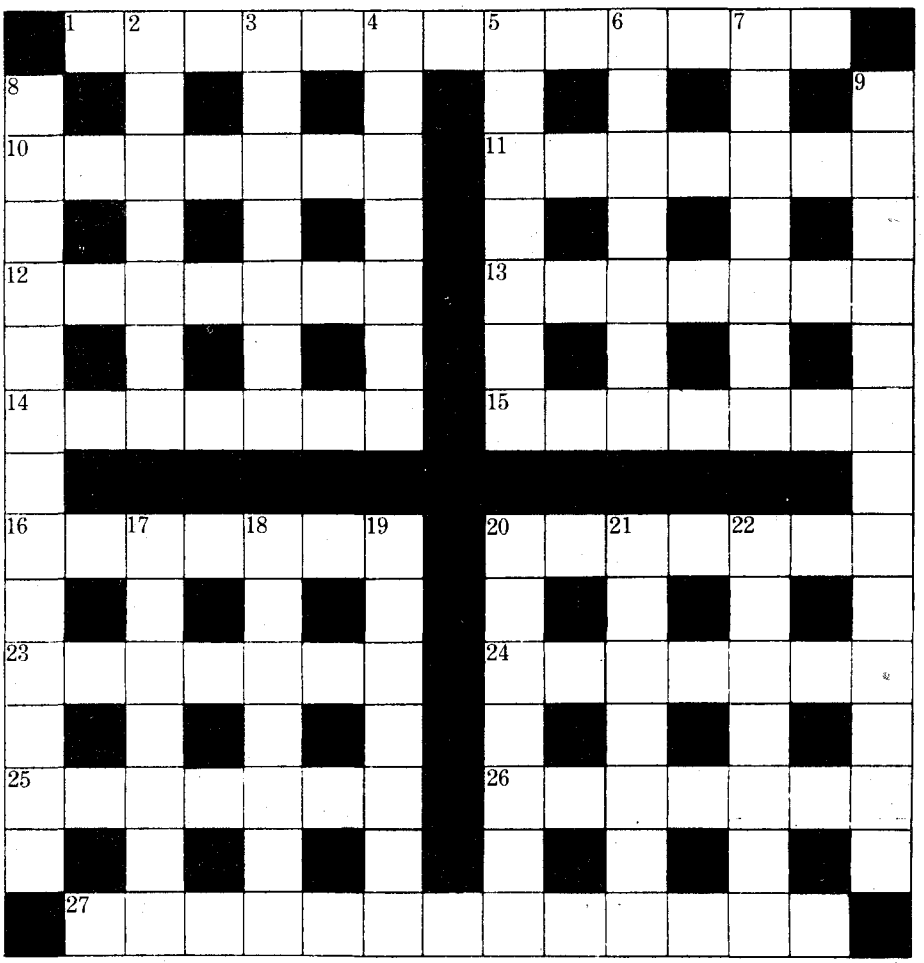
I	C	E	B	O	A	T	■	A	G	I	T	A	T	E
N	■	R	■	N	■	O	■	T	■	O	■	L	■	R
G	A	S	H	■	M	O	D	E	R	N	I	S	T	S

Crossword Puzzle No. 2022

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Might have been applied once if one had trouble with tar. (It could be anti-sectional.) (3-1-4-5)
10 Gradually impart what is not out yet. (7)
11 Nothing in the package could be so funny! (7)
12 Is there a grain on diamonds, as they might say? It crowns the wall. (7)
13 The music maker came back in just less than a hundred with a trophy. (7)
14 Sensing trouble, find officers here. (7)
15 Importune a debtor gone wrong in a dark prison. (7)
16 State what you might call a current movie hero—getting in with one used to taking a bow. (7)
20 Censure concerning the strength of spirit. (7)
23 Like one who talks of a testing type? (7)
24 The C.I.A. cuts out of it, being corrosive. (7)
25 A lion is loose! Get something to hold things close together! (7)
26 If you do, you won't hit a particle of the assignment! (7)
27 Doesn't have the know-how to get around a mischief-maker every individual makes blameless. (13)

DOWN

2 It's certain—fool around and you'll see how one convinces you! (7)
3 Thinking of nothing, and longing for something else? (7)
4 Well, you certainly don't have this! (7)
5 Took off from such as 15? (7)
6 Though it's not exactly far, I evidently am able to get one from Egypt, for example. (7)
7 A long time in the queue for such a reputedly noble qualification. (7)
8 Perhaps a record color with one on board being certainly not 27! (13)
9 Not important in an omen, assuming I have an inclination to make it. (13)
17 Scorn is said incorrectly to be found in noisy confusion! (7)
18 Lays haphazardly the total amount, which could be sweet. (7)
19 Are about what the bell did, when put in order. (7)
20 Ceramic product, describing such as grapes. (7)
21 Quiet country—no longer a country on its own. (7)
22 How one might order things, or does one have to be charged to be so? (2,5)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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